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December 7, 1984 #250

RAM

BRONSKI BEAT
Waifs Wise Up

GO-BETWEENS
MOODISTS
Prodigals Return

JOHN KENNEDY
WRONG KIND OF STONEAGE
RED WEATHER
Buffoonery In Disguise

UB40
BOSS
SPIKES
PARIS GREEN

Inthelegit

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A RAM Election Preview

7 **TEEV — Whither The Mini-Series?**

8 **RADIOZ — Vote For Public Access**

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ADELE BARNETT encounters some Twisted Theatre

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by HELEN FITZGERALD

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Two Expatriate Extremes come home

18 **UB40 — Labourers of Love**

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20 **THE SINGLES DIGEST (Urp!)**

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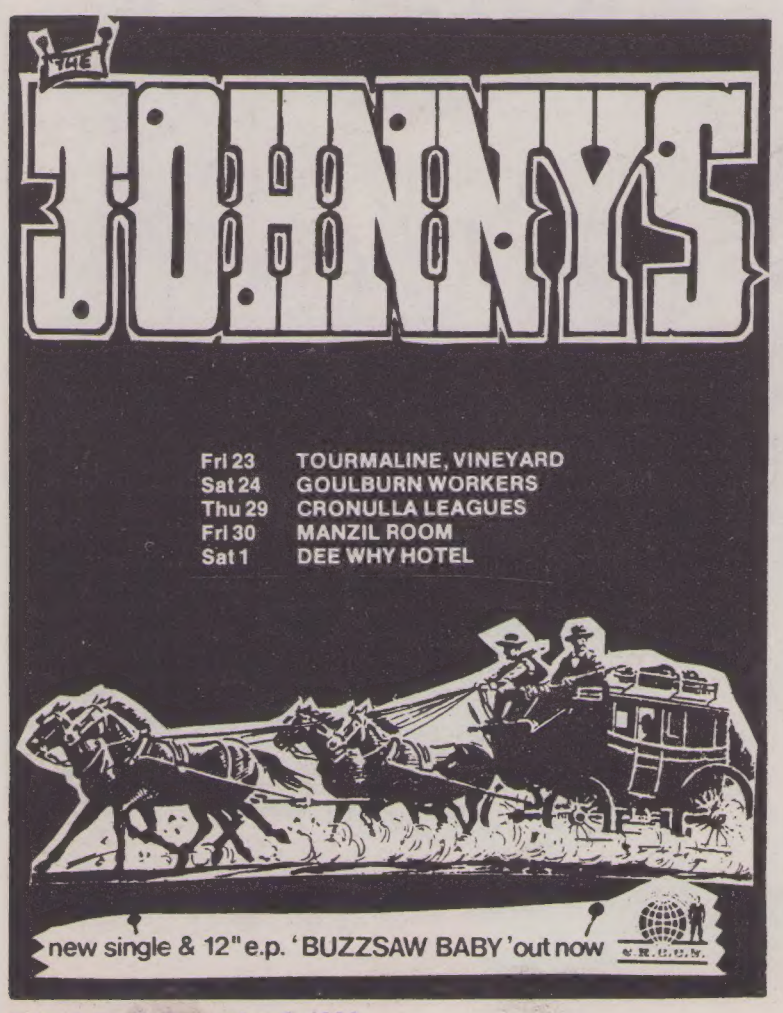
22 **SEEN & HEARD**
BERLIN, STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN & MADROOM live, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS On Stage, VIDEODROME at the movies, plus the usual array of albums — including Red Sails.



SEND YOUR RAM LETTERS TO: 3RD FLOOR, 52 FRANCIS ST, E. SYDNEY. 2010.

McMILLAN LEGIT? SHOCK DISCOVERY...

Andrew McMillan getting double mileage from his interviews these days? Learning to stretch his tape recorder for further $? First it was Jimmy Barnes in RAM and the *Age Weekender* (the main difference was he left out the scream of *"BA-A-A-A-ARNNE-SSEEEE!"* in the *Age* article!) Next up it's a double take on the Oils. RAM facing the big light and the *Age* Red Sailing on the Oils Slick cover.

The question needs to be asked, is Andrew McMillan trying to become legitimate? After all these years of his pub-crawling exploits/gossip/fiction/humour, McMillan legitimate?! (He even managed an article in that other music mag: diversity huh, a different style for each occasion.)

Meanwhile, before they drop the bomb, there is still BA-AARNNE-SSEEEE's great *Bodyswerve* album to rave about. *Promise Me You'll Call* is so stunning, it leaves everything else for dead.

Research: Uncredited .....
Text: J.C. Holmes, Melbourne, Vic.

1. 'When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro' (Hunter S. Thompson)
2. Hey! Penetration! Fame! Women! Drugs! Where?!
3. All donations PO Box 185, Potts Pt. 2011

— A. McM.

WHERE IS FRANK?

I'd like to thank Serge D.V. Wilson, W.A. (Nov. 9 Iss.) for his praise of Died Pretty and Screaming Tribesmen. I, too, think they have an eye for talent (in more ways than one). Hopefully a second letter urging Frank Brunetti to let us know a bit more about Ronald Peno, who co-wrote both singles, will give us a reply before 1985. It would be appreciated Frank!

D.B., Heidelberg, Vic.

Ha! Little did you know — around the very time you were writing this letter, Frankie went to Melbourne with Died Pretty. Current odds on his replying to this letter are running at about 300-1. Still, if you asked Frank about *Frank*, you'd have a chance of a response before the end of this decade — but expect a *long* letter.

WILD BOYS IN DRUGS HORROR!

I'll cut through the bullshit as much as possible. I was so bloody disgusted to find out that the members of Duran Duran were involved with a drug bust at the Rum Runner. I am an admirer of Duran Duran, but shit, can they be idiots! Don't they realise what they are getting into with cocaine?

It's bad enough them destroying themselves, but what about the tens of thousands of fans they influence? I remember Nick Rhodes saying once that they care about their fans, and wouldn't be here today without them. So what the bloody hell do they think this recent bit of 'indulgence' will amount to?

The drug scene is bad enough without people who have influence promoting it. Why, when the kids between 12 & 15 find out about it, they'll want to 'experiment' (as Simon Le Bon would put it) with drugs and they mightn't get out of it as lightly as Simon, who stopped three months after. To the extreme, we might end up with a lot of dead young kids.

So here's my plea, guys: Andy, Roger, John, Simon and Nick, *please*, if you're not going to think of the damage you are doing to yourselves, spare a thought for the kids you influence, eh?

Cheryl Ward, Armidale, NSW.

Simon 'gets out of it lightly'? Can't be into heavy drugs...

ANGRY RETORT TO AN ANGRY REPORT

Angry Anderson to enter politics? (Death Or Glory, Iss. 249.) Perhaps Bruce Ruxton and Geoffrey Blainey could be his running mates! Anderson's brand of nationalism stinks of the RSL mentality that would have every young Australian conscripted (what a solution to unemployment!) to breed a new generation of 'Aussie Anzacs'.

The Orwellian reference to the Asian invasion ('multicultural refugees') and the 'they're taking our jobs' argument is Blainey at his intellectual best. Anderson even has the cheek to give this thinly disguised fascism some respectability by quoting Martin Luther King and Che Guevara. Anderson implies he is willing to die for freedom — presumably as a reincarnated Anzac fighting off the Asian hordes. Vote '1' Angry Anderson — intolerance and violence.

Tony, Carlton, Vic.

Angry — you have the right of reply. We'll set aside a page for you next issue, long as you promise to be brief...

A CURE FOR THE LOST ADJECTIVE

Have you ever noticed how unique, intelligent, different, creative, lovely, innovative, appealing, interesting, artistic, unpretentious, gorgeous, obscure, avant garde, marvellously absurd, fabulously abstract and wonderfully good-looking Robert Smith from the Cure is?
If you hadn't, I'd just thought I'd let you know.

Deborah Dickson, Perth, W.A.

Did *he* tell you all this?

HOW DARE YOU DO TO U2 WHAT YOU DID

This is just a little note to Helen Fitzgerald regarding her article on Brian Eno 'Before And After U2' (Issue 247). Or, more to the point, regarding her comments about the aforesaid Irish band. 'Bombastic, pompous and arrogant believers in the sound of their own trumpet' was, I recall, the description given. Sure, everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but in my book this was going a bit far.

Criticism is fine when it's constructive, but this sort of cynicism — directed at a band which is dedicated to higher ideals than raking in the millions — is unfair. Who does Helen think she is to be so blithely passing judgement on four people who have succeeded in bringing messages of love and peace to thousands of people through exhilarating and inspirational music?

Midnight Oil are acclaimed for taking a firm stance on issues such as war and peace — why should U2 be any different? Is it the fact they're Christians? If so, let's have a little religious tolerance, please. After all, the band don't intend to force such doctrines down our throats. Anyway Helen, although I believe you're entitled to your opinion, I challenge you to listen again. That's all U2 ask of you — an open mind.

Lisa Hewett, MacLeod West, Vic.

Please forgive Helen — she's Irish.

McGEE FOR THE NME? IT'S ALL A FABLE...

May Tim McGee be banished to the *NME* school of journalism for life. His totally pathetic attempt at a singles review (issue 248) was one of the most abominable pieces of trash journalism I have read since reading *Juke* recently. The objectivity of the review went out the window along with his obviously child-like intelligence.
If the sole purpose of the singles review was to show us Mr. McGee's literary prowess, may we be forced to listen to the Fable Records catalogue on tape-loop for life.
Please bring objectivity back to the singles review, or get James Baker to do it. At least he has got a sense of humour.

The Critic's critic, Brisbane, Qld.

Let's start that Fable tape-loop with 'Knock Knock Who's There?', huh? *Please*?

Transit Lounge

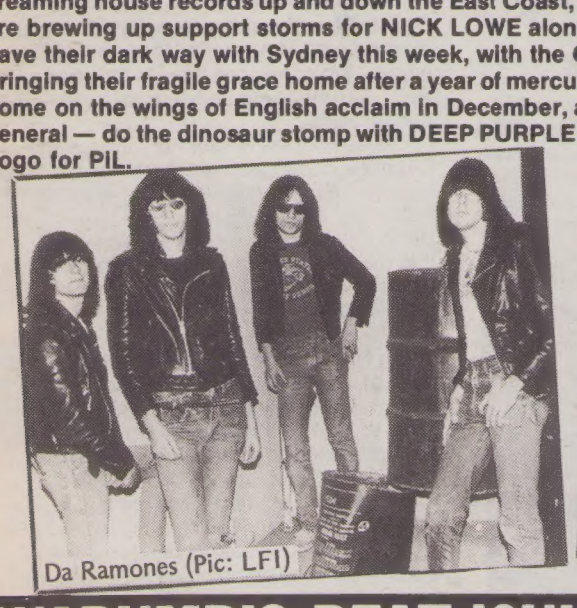
PEOPLE EVENTS THINGS ON THE MOVE

RISING YEAST OF BURDON; RAMONES GET DOWN IN '85

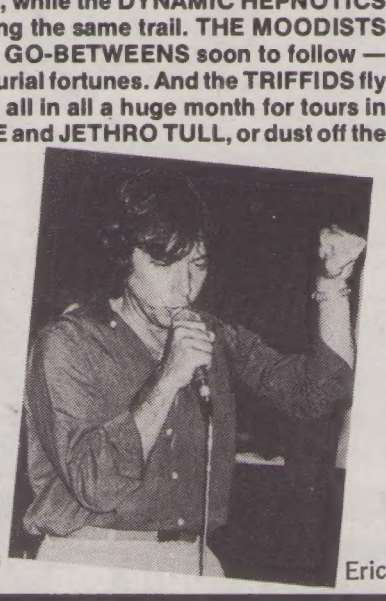
While veteran Animal Bluesman ERIC BURDON hits town for an extensive pub tour this week, prepare for cartoon punks THE RAMONES, who are due in February for their second-ever taste of Australian audiences. The last occasion was August 1980, and although they've been comparatively quiet (who, the *Ramones!??!*) on most fronts since then, expect the same raucous charm and rampant fringes this time round. Beat on the Brats!!

The current incarnation of the Eric Burdon Band, a distinctive side-project of Burdon's original 60s flagship The Animals, kicks off November 23 at Sydney's Caringbah Inn and thenceforth for all states bar the usual bridesmaids (Tasmania and the N.T.). Winding up just before Christmas with three shows in Perth, the Burdon Band will feature new rock/r'n'b-based material along with the expected Animals standards, such as *House Of The Rising Sun* (inevitably), *Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood, Sky Pilot* and *San Franciscan Nights*. Expect a few audience howls for the War classic, *Spill The Wine* as well.

On the local front, the double-act reigns supreme with MODELS and MACHINATIONS creaming house records up and down the East Coast, while the DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS are brewing up support storms for NICK LOWE along the same trail. THE MOODISTS have their dark way with Sydney this week, with the GO-BETWEENS soon to follow — bringing their fragile grace home after a year of mercurial fortunes. And the TRIFFIDS fly home on the wings of English acclaim in December, all in all a huge month for tours in general — do the dinosaur stomp with DEEP PURPLE and JETHRO TULL, or dust off the pogo for PIL.

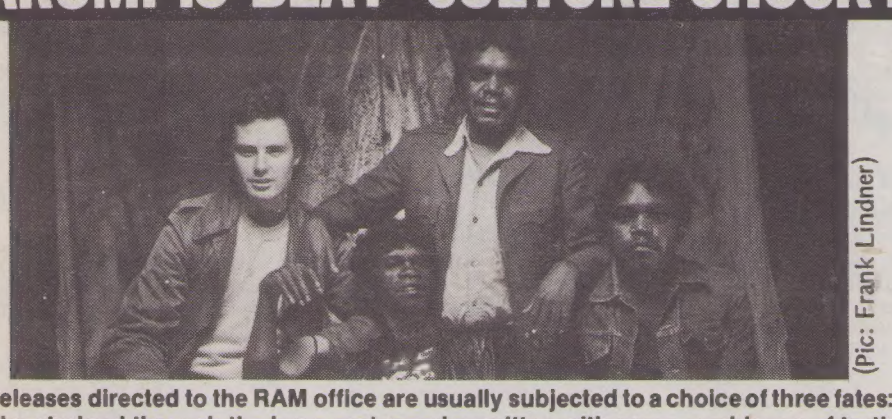


Da Ramones (Pic: LFI)



Eric

WARUMPIS BEAT 'CULTURE SHOCK'!



(Pic: Frank Lindner)

Press releases directed to the RAM office are usually subjected to a choice of three fates: 1) they're strained through the hype-meter and rewritten with some semblance of truth and syntax; 2) they wind up in our Comedy File; or 3) they fly low over the desk, pause briefly for cursory inspection, then proceed directly to the wastepaper basket at great speed.

So it came as a pleasant surprise to receive the following release — quite the best piece of PR inspiration we've encountered this year, and on an exceedingly worthy subject: the Warumpi Band, due back in town before the end of this month. Wish they were all like this...

'The Warumpi Band today found a group of lost Europeans who had never before made contact with Aboriginals. The family, who are in good condition, consist of a man and a woman in their forties, and a boy and girl in their early teens. They have white skins, fair hair, angular features and wear clothes. They are very wary of Aboriginal people. The exact location of the group is being withheld to lessen the impact of culture shock. However, it is believed they were found driving a Mercedes in the Eastern Suburbs region.

Nosepeg Tjupurrula, self-titled "King of the Pintupi", has ordered that all Aboriginal people should leave them alone. However, he intends to meet the family himself later this week. Other elders such as Tutama Tjapangati, Uta Uta Tjangala and Watuma Tjungurrayi were reported to be astounded by the news; but similarly delighted that here was a living example of a family whose culture can be traced back 200 years.

Uta Uta refused to believe the reports at first, insisting it was all "parntu". Several polaroid snapshots were taken of the family and rushed to Kintore yesterday. Watuma Tjungurrayi, renowned world traveller, confirmed that the photos were indeed of Europeans, as he had seen similar people overseas.

George Rurrambu, lead singer with the Warumpi Band, is conversant with the family — in their native tongue, English. He says the family speak a more convoluted form of English — however, "we had no trouble understanding each other." George recommended that the family be allowed to keep their clothes on to continue to get their own tucker as they have done always, by foraging amongst supermarket shelves which are numerous in the area. Apparently some concerned members of the band had been feeding the family 'proper tucka' such as kangaroo and goanna, with the result that they were now getting sick.

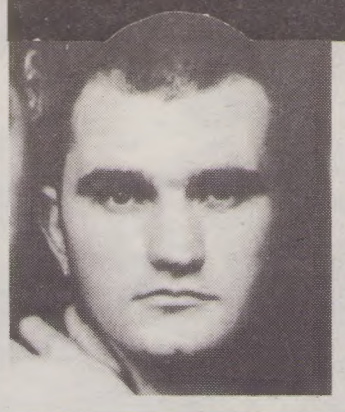
George also announced that there had been sightings of other Mercedes cars similar to the one used by the family, which seems to indicate that there are more Europeans yet to make contact with the Warumpi Band.,

The band has acquired several interesting artifacts which, George says, will be a valuable aid to the research into the family's lifestyle. The artifacts are believed to include an American Express credit card, a gold Dunhill cigarette lighter, various keys belonging to a house, motor cars and a yacht. George stressed that the family is not to be an object of curiosity, and that there will be no measuring of cranium sizes. "They are human beings," he said.

George Rurrambu was unruffled when pressed as to whether the Warumpi Band was exploiting the emergence of the family for its own publicity purposes. "Not in the least," he countered. "These people were just on their way to a bank when we found them. We just offered to employ them as roadies."

The Warumpi Band will be performing in Sydney at the Hordern Pavilion on Sunday 25th November with Midnight Oil, and during the season of 'Music and Dance of the First Australians' at the Sydney Opera House from December 1 to 7.'

TATTS LOSE LEACH



Bassist Geordie Leach has departed the latest Rose Tattoo lineup to join a new outfit called 'Illustrated Man' — ironically enough, the appropriately named group contains three more ex-Tatts in slide guitarist Peter Wells, drummer Dallas Royal and moonlighting X bassist Ian Rilen.

Leach's defection leaves Angry Anderson as the sole original member of Rose Tattoo — what's more, he's the only member of the current lineup with tatts, bar slide player Greg Jordan, who sports a few token emblems; certainly nothing on the scale of Angry's or his former colleagues.

Wonder if Illustrated Man are after a singer??

Though Frankie Goes To Hollywood used a Reagan soundalike voiceover for *Two Tribes*, Talking Heads' **Jerry Harrison** has used the real thing on his new solo single, *Five Minutes*. The song incorporates a tape of the Senile One's now-famous on-air 'joke': "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you that I've signed legislation which will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." Harrison tracked down the tape to a college radio station in Milwaukee, and despite lucrative offers from several majors, he's released the completed song on an obscure independent label. If it charts, he says, he'll split his royalties with his 'lyricist'...

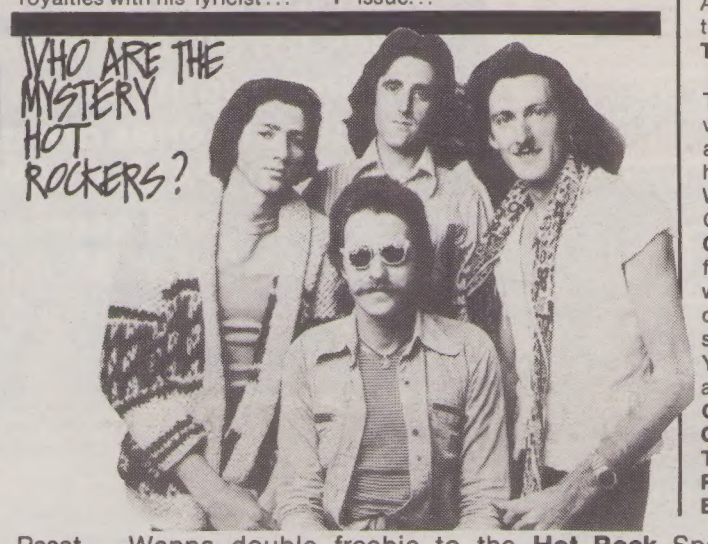
Ah, the irony... Just as **Split Enz** score a hard-earned release from their contract embroilment with **Mushroom**, that very company makes a near-relentless sweep of the N.Z. Pop Awards. **Tim Finn** was named as 'International Performer Of The Year', while **Dance Exponents** scored 'Album Of The Year' and 'Best Vocalist' in **Jordan Luck**. Individual members of the Enz will be free to negotiate with the label of their choice as of January 1, 1985 — this after much bickering with Mushroom over alleged apathetic promotion of their farewell album, *See Ya Round*. What the hell? We'll acknowledge 12 years of Enz Achievements with a special retrospective feature next issue...

Sydney's northern beach boys **Ber-Dum Ber-Dum** have just seen the first light of vinyl... *Love Potion No. XXX* (purportedly an original) has only recently been independently released. Bound to be huge in Narrabeen...

Naughty Rhythms play their last show for '84 on Saturday 24th at the Piccadilly in Sydney's Kings Cross. They'll be back in the new year with a mini-album featuring *Dance Crazy*...

After a couple of false starts, **Bring Philip**'s new single, *Comforts* finally saw release this week. Complete with guest brass section, they'll launch it at Sydney's Graphic Arts Club on December 7 in the company of **Samurai Trash** and **P.S.I.**

The Gold Coast's premier rock venue, **The Jet Club**, winds up almost five months of intense, high quality competition on Wednesday 21st with the Grand Final of its **1984 Battle Of The Bands**. One of the following acts will walk away with over $20,000 in prizes donated by a range of sponsors including the Yamaha Musicians' Pro Shop and Music Farm Studios: **Good Home Cookin', Clapping Hands, Inner Trance, Neon Park, Rhythm'n'Blues Bros** and **Broken Toys**.



Pssst... Wanna double freebie to the **Hot Rock** Spectacular at Sydney's Brookvale Oval on Sunday, November 25? If you're one of the first six astute historians to phone us and identify which band most of the above-pictured suavos are currently playing with, we'll give you a double pass to see the **Radiators, Icehouse, Richard Clapton, Allniters, Uncanny X-Men, Electric Pandas** and **George Smilovici**. (Clue: the mystery band above has since metamorphosed into one of the acts on the Hot Rock Bill — but WHO??)

Otherwise, you'll be up for $12.70 (advance) from Mitchells Bass/Farrell's Music or $15 at the gate. Rack those shattered memories! The phone no. to ring is (02) 331 2591.

PROMISE US YOU'LL CALL

They've been at it again — that lowest of life-forms, thieves who specialise in relieving innocent victims of their priceless tools of trade. This time it's happened to members of Jimmy Barnes' touring band — a barefaced, dastardly ripoff took place backstage at their Sydney Uni gig earlier this month.

Three irreplaceable Fender Stratocasters belonging to guitarists Mal Eastick and Chris Stockley took a walk from the Wentworth Building at the Uni on November 2, where the band were due to perform. Quite apart from the fact that all three guitars are highly valuable, one of them once belonged to the late Andrew Durant and was given to Mal Eastick by the Durant family after his death.

The good news is that this one's been found — someone out there's got a conscience. But the other two — and the creeps who pinched 'em — are still at large. One's a 1962 Sunburst with a white scratch plate, Fender pickups, tremelo and rosewood neck, paintwork worn to wood in places; the other's a blonde woodgrain '76 Strat with white scratch plate and original maple neck, gold Schaller machine-heads, no tremelo and chocked bridge.

Any info whatsoever, don't hesitate to phone (02) 908 4866 during business hours; yes, there's a substantial reward, no questions asked. Alternatively, ring RAM and we'll pass on the message — you can reverse the charges in both cases.

Presumably upon hearing the news that Sydney's **Non-Stop Dancers** had parodied them into oblivion with *Shake This City*, the **Stray Cats** have split. They needn't have bothered — *Hit The Road Jack* effectively predates both bands...

After six months' vagrancy, Melbourne's **Strange Tenants** return to Sydney later this month with a new (self-financed) album in tow, entitled *Moving In*. A single, *Work At My Machine*, has been released already.

The **Chinless Elite**, that well-rounded collection of inner Sydney icons featuring Jeremy Oxley, Jon Schofield, Marcus Phelan and drummer **Luke Bendt** (ex-Affections), makes its breathlessly awaited debut at the Hopetoun Hotel in Surry Hills on the 27th, between 1pm and 5pm. With special guests the **Screaming Tribesmen**, it's the Hopetoun's last extended lunch show for 1984 — and it's free.

LET'S DISARM THE SENATE!

With the Federal Election little more than a week away, a few powerful people are getting mighty nervous — while the passionate ones are quietly confident. From Canberra, PAUL CLARKE demystifies Senate procedure and assesses the NDP's chances, while ANDREW McMILLAN attends its campaign launch in Sydney. Don't forget to vote.

TWENTY yards down the corridor, the Australian Senate is burning the Midnight Oil for the last time of the 33rd Parliament. This week has been one of the Senate's busiest since it began sitting in May 1983.

After an intense three days of legislating, and the fourth week of consecutive sittings, 50 tired and grumpy senators are *still* sitting at 12 am. In the past six hours, they have debated and passed a mammoth 15 bills — something of a record for the so-called 'sleepy hollow' of government.

Until I began reporting Federal Politics, I knew next to nothing about the Senate. I knew it was the Upper House of our two-house government, that the next step up the ladder was the Queen, and I knew that in 1975 it had exercised (or should that read exorcised?) its constitutional muscle to 'block supply', and had thrown the Whitlam government out on its ear.

But after being here for six months, the first thought I have of the Senate is of how boring it is to sit through. One song that comes to mind describes Senate business to a tee: the Cure's *Waiting For Something To Happen*. One feels sure, if one waits long enough, that something *will* happen. But like I said, I've been here six months.

Senators often prattle incessantly about what seem the most inconsequential of matters. Tonight is fairly typical. So far, we've argued whether the Roxby Downs demons (trators) were financed by any of the 'Communist' states, whether the ALP had anything to do with the attempt on Margaret Thatcher's life, and whether vigilante 'scab' north Tasmanian bus drivers could maintain their evil ways in the event of a petrol boycott. Rollicking stuff.

And so it goes. But beyond the odd groan of deference, or an old school tie "HEAR HEAR!", there really doesn't seem to be any communication. Just a polemical stream of bi-partisan bitching. One drone after another, and no-one but the Hansard recordists seems to pay any attention.

Little power, and even less passion. $41,802 a year, plus expenses. yes please.

THE events of this evening become even sillier when you remember that the newly formed Nuclear Disarmament Party has lately been attacked by all the other parties and sections of the media for being a 'one issue' party. Even if it *is* the most important issue of our time.

The major parties have had their noses put out of joint by the arrival of the NDP. Both the Democrats and (rather incredibly) the ALP are arguing that their respective platforms incorporate everything that the NDP are standing for. But the current wave of popularity that the party is riding on suggests that the nuclear issue is more important to the Australian electorate than the major party strategists seemed to recognise. And obviously the same electorate has less than an innate trust in the major parties to come up with the goods on the nuclear issue.

A brief explanation of electoral procedure... This election on December 1 is a half-Senate election, which means only seven Senate seats are being contested. In NSW, Garrett therefore needs about 12.5 per cent of the popular vote. A recent Gallup poll revealed that 20 per cent of the NSW electorate (where Garrett is making his run) would vote for a candidate who stood to promote the cause of nuclear disarmament.

According to Mark Dodshon, erstwhile RAM scribe and now Peter Garrett's campaign manager, the figure is not quite as encouraging as it sounds.

"Many of these people will still vote for left-wing ALP or Democrat candidates who are promoting the issue," Dodshon said.

"We've conducted polls that show support for the NDP in NSW is running at about 8 per cent. That means we've still got to make up about 5 per cent to get Peter into the Senate."

Peter Garrett and Mark Dodshon are going on the hustings in the best way they know how — gigging in pubs. A number of gigs have been organised to consolidate the NDP's popularity, especially strong among young voters. By the time this story goes to press, a benefit night at Selina's in Sydney will already have taken place, with Jimmy Barnes, Richard Clapton plus members of Rose Tattoo, Divinyls, Sunnyboys, Dropbears and the Johnnys all taking the stage to show their solidarity with the NDP cause. All proceeds will go toward media advertisements for Garrett's campaign.

Rick Jurzevic of Sydney's Kommotion Club has also organised "Dance for Disarmament" nights at The Gap (Trade Union Club) every Tuesday until December 1.

The Oils themselves are currently on a national tour, which will peak in Sydney in the week beginning November 22.

All that said, we reach the crux. If the party, and Garrett, are able to maintain their rage for another few weeks, we may hear Garrett's voice on the ABC Parliamentary broadcasts more than we will on rock music stations. But will it make any difference?

The general state of inertia in the Senate will no doubt suit Peter Garrett's wildly aggressive pacifism. The whole Federal press gallery, most of whom wouldn't sit through more than one Midnight Oil tune, eagerly await his arrival. But chiefly because they're a bunch of shit stirrers.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* recently made this point to Garrett: "Up until how you've been spoilt rotten. You've been playing to a captivated audience, and your fans are all ears because they like the sound of Midnight Oil. But before you've been in the Senate a week, you'll be wondering why you bothered."

When Citizen Garrett announced his intention to stand for the Senate, he said: "I want to debate the issue with Hawke, and not with a six-string guitar. I'm going to use my tongue."

Senate has very little to do with the House of Reps, so there's fat chance of Hawke offering Peter Garrett more than a platitude... the example of the Hawke government's Ambassador for Nuclear Disarmament springs to mind. And four years down that road? Perhaps the *Herald* has a point.

BECAUSE of Midnight Oil's touring commitments, Garrett recently missed an opportunity set up by 2JJJ to debate the nuclear disarmament issue with Bill Hayden and Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Michael MacKellar, who were both keen to take part. If he keeps that up, Garrett runs the risk of being pigeonholed as a one-issue nancy boy by politicians of their ilk.

When interviewed about JJJ's "Big Bang Debate," Hayden got quite a bit of mileage from saying: "Having read the lyrics of his music, I am convinced there is only one party Peter Garrett would be comfortable in — the Labour Party."

The head of the Nuclear Disarmament Party, Canberra doctor Michael Denborough, was outraged by the claim — but it was in the *SMH* before the NDP had a chance to reply. It was Denborough who recently pointed out that the uranium mined at Roxby by the Hawke Labor government went — after a number of transactions overseas — into nuclear warheads.

The future of the NDP, when you come to think of it, is just about as uncertain as your life and mine in this nuclear age. Critics of this "one issue party" could well be right. It could be damned to the scrapheap of "nice tries". But just IMAGINE the shit that will hit the Parliamentary fan if Garrett does get in.

"BIGFOOT ON SPEED HITS THE SLEEPY HOLLOW". You shouldn't deny yourself the chance to be an onlooker.

POSTCRIPT:

Since the above story was written, the Bulletin's *November 20 issue has revealed that the national popularity of the NDP had jumped from zero to eight per cent in a fortnight.*

The Bulletin *also noted that the projected Senate vote for the ALP had dropped from 50% to 43%. Since the national popularity of the Democrats remained at 10%, the NDP have obviously made their gains straight from disaffected ALP voters.*

Gary Morgan, head of Morgan Gallup Polls, said the NDP was rating higher than the Democrats in Victoria... No 1 on the Victorian NDP ticket, Mrs Jean Melzer, would have been elected to the Senate if the poll had been held that weekend. Peter Garrett's popularity with voters, he said, was constantly increasing.

On the hustings, PM Bob Hawke was obviously alarmed by the NDP's huge percentage gains, and their inroads into the Labor vote. Throughout the week on talkback radio programmes, Hawke described a vote for the NDP as "a vote wasted".

In an obvious swipe at Peter Garrett, the Prime Minister said on the ABC's AM *show last Tuesday:* "You can sing all the songs you like, and you can write all the slogans you like on all the wars in the world. That won't change one iota the decisions of government to take action to proceed effectively towards disarmament."

Government decisions must inevitably follow the decisions of the electorate. We'll see what happens come December 1.

PAUL CLARKE

IT PROMISED to be the most boring federal election campaign since 1980. Prime Minister Hawke, a man showing all the symptoms of advanced Ibogaine addiction gibbering lunacy at the Royal Perth Yacht Club in the wake of the America's Cup win, tearful emotional breakdowns, megalomaniacal claims: "I want to say... that my government has done more... to constructively advance in international forums the issues of disarmament and peace than any previous government in this country, and, I would assert, more than any other government in the world."

A man obviously on the brink of Ibogaine-induced madness, he planned to romp back home to the Lodge on his government's record — a record that hasn't, by means of calling a premature election, been given the opportunity to backfire.

Meanwhile, Andrew Peacock, a man who once expressed a fondness for hard rock, would desperately fight his one and only campaign as federal leader of the Liberal party and promptly go down in a pall of stale smoke in early December.

It was a tight, if unimaginative script for an election campaign we could all have slept through quite peacefully, if it hadn't been for that damned renegade Garrett and the dirty great spanner he chose to throw into the plot. By accepting a nomination as the Number One Senate candidate for the Nuclear Disarmament Party in NSW, Garrett really screwed it up.

There's a rumour circulating that the NDP was actually instigated by right wing members of the ALP who wanted to destroy left wing raving once and for all by giving them an ineffective party that wouldn't draw more than a handful of votes, and would, therefore, give the government an unofficial mandate to pursue Hawke's current policies on uranium, etc. But when Garrett stepped into the breech, the rules were rewritten. Here was a character who could command attention, attract a following, had a proven track record, was articulate, intelligent and honest. In short, he was a threat.

He was assured of media coverage — 'ROCK 'N ROLL STAR VIES FOR SENATE VOTE' — and was soon hailed as the only interesting candidate in the whole process. In a matter of weeks, the ballgame had changed and the politicians were not impressed.

Fearful of losing support, the ALP went onto the offensive. Hawke and Hayden suddenly had to defend themselves — which entailed attacking Garrett and the NDP. The Democrats, the Nationals and the Liberals got in on the act. They couldn't handle it. Here was something that threatened their traditional power structures. Here was a candidate and an issued that threatened to get people interested in political process. Heaven forbid!

And so it came to pass that Garrett and the Nuclear Disarmament Party lauched their campaign on the banks of Sydney Harbour at dawn, talking about peace, harmony and releasing white pigeons that floated over the tranquil waters of the Harbour, soaring over the same waters Sinclair wants to clutter up with nuclear-powered submarines, the same waters that are periodically littered with British and American warships that may or may not be armed with nuclear weapons.

Garrett, resplendent in bush hat and the ubiquitous khaki workshirt that's dominated his campaign apparel, conceded that "we're not operating out of the flashiest premises in the world, we don't have the biggest budget in the world. But we've got heart, we've got spirit, we've got hope and we've got faith. And they're the most important qualities of all."

It all went off quite well, of course, and the following morning Garrett got his photo on the front page of the dailies next to banner headlines like "PM's NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE — Don't waste your vote, he pleads" *(Sydney Morning Herald)*, and "HAWKE TRIES TO STEM THE ANTI-NUCLEAR TIDE" *(The Australian)*.

All of which goes to show that even if the NDP don't win a seat in the new Parliament, they've at least been successful in bringing the Nuclear issue to the forefront of debate. Without Garrett's involvement, it would've been a political non-issue that would've had little effect on the campaign script. Instead, it's sending shivers up the spines of those who would prefer to ignore it. And that can only be a good thing.

ANDREW McMILLAN

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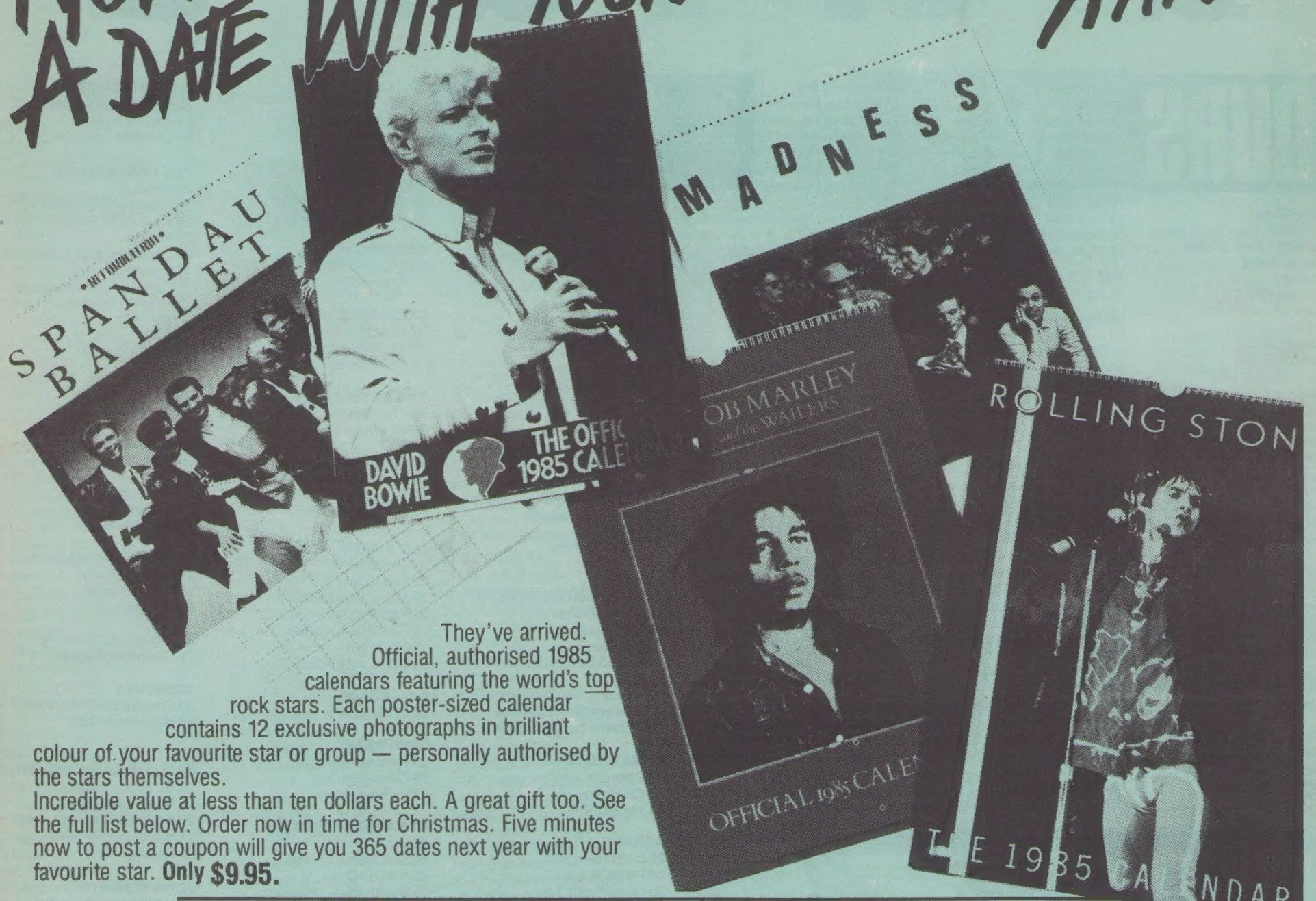

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Peter Garrett says....

VOTE 1

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PARTY

SENATE CANDIDATES ARE:

TAS.	A.C.T.	N.S.W.	VIC.	W.A.	S.A.	QLD
Ian Paulin	John Conway	Peter Garrett	Jean Melzer	Jo Vallentine	Frances Mowling	PatsyGoodwin
Anne Parker	Jan Barratt	Gillian Fisher	Giorgio Venturini	Lindsay Mathews	Ian Modistach	Bernard Hockings
Ph: 346 397	Ph: 474 576	Marie Ann Hockings	Ph: 631 466	Ph: 328 4043	Doug Peers	Ph: 229 7143
		Russel Ward			Ph: 794 521	
		Ph: 267 8577				

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Canberra, A.C.T. - Robyn Hancock
Gippsland, VIC. - Peter Gardner
Eden Monaro, N.S.W. - Bob Shumack
Gilmore, N.S.W. - Rod Lander
Kalgoorlie, W.A. - David Nourish

WE WILL NOT COMPROMISE ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The future is ours. VOTE 1 NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PARTY.

We stand for : The banning of Nuclear weapons and Foreign bases from Australian Territory, and the cessation of the mining and export of uranium

Take a step for survival

Join the Nuclear Disarmament Party now

There are millions of us. VOTE 1 NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PARTY.

Written and authorised by Steve Melzer and Gillian Martin, 4 Grace St., Camberwell VIC. 3124

GIGS

TOURS

ERIC BURDON
23 Caringbah Inn
24 Dee Why Hotel (Early)
24 Selinas (Late)
25 Panthers
26 Hornsby RSL
28 Newcastle Workers
30 Bris. Glen Hotel
1 Bombay Rock
2 Easts Leagues
4 Royals Rugby (ACT)
5 Local Inn
6 Shellharbour Workers
7 Doyalson RSL
8 Bankstown RSL
10 Adel. Bridgeway Hotel
11 Adel. Bridgeway Hotel
12 Melb.
13 Melb.
14 Melb.
15 Melb.

CANNED HEAT
23 Whitesands Hotel, W.A.
24 Floreat Hotel, W.A.
25 Charles Hotel, W.A.
27 Telford Westlands, S.A.
28 Pt. Pirie, S.A.
29 Pharoahs, S.A.
30 Sth. Gambia Rugby, S.A.
1 Broadford, Vic.

ERIC CLAPTON
23 Melb. Fest. Hall
24 Melb. Fest. Hall
28 Perth Ent. Cent.

DEEP PURPLE
27 Perth Ent. Cent.
30 Adel. Memorial Drive
2 Auckland Western Springs
4 Wellington Atheletic Park
7 QE2 Park Christchurch
9Bris. Fest. Hall
12 Syd. Ent. Cent.
13 Syd. Ent. Cent
16 Melb. Ent. Cent.
17 Melb. Ent. Cent.

THE GO—BETWEENS
Dates and Venues T.B.A.

HEEBEEGEEBEES
Dec. 7 Revesby Workers
8 Revesby Workers
Jan. 15 Balmain RSL
16 Balmain RSL
17 Balmain RSL
18 Balmain RSL
19 Balmain RSL

JETHRO TULL
Dec. 5 Melb. Ent. Cent.
8 Bris. Fest. Hall
10 Syd. Ent. Cent.
14 Adel. Fest. Hall
17 Perth Ent. Cent.

NICK LOWE
23 Ferntree Gully Hotel
24 Central Club Hotel
25 Pier Hotel
27 Chevron
28 St. George Sailing
29 ANU (ACT)
30 Shellharbour Workers
1 Selinas
2 Wentworthville Leagues
4 Dee Why Hotel
5 Bluegum Hotel
6 Bombay Rock
7 Mansfield Tav.
8 Mooloolaba Hotel
9 Byron Bay Arts Factory

MIDNIGHT OIL
23 Hordern Pavilion
24 Hordern Pavilion
25 Hordern Pavilion
27 Hordern Pavilin
28 Hordern Pavilion
29 Hordern Pavilion
6 ANU (ACT)

THE MOODISTS
23 Graphic Arts
25 Mosman Hotel
27 Bluegum Hotel
15 Hordern Pavilion

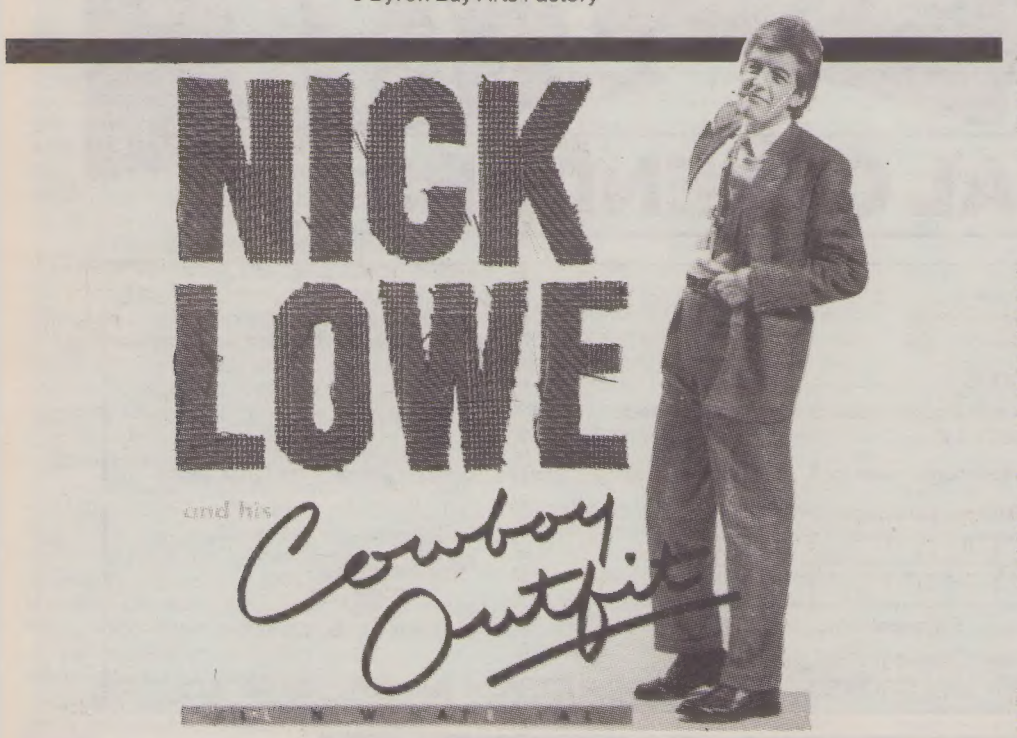
PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED
Dec. 14 Bris. Fest. Hall
15 Hordern Pavilion
16 ANU (ACT)
18 Melb. Palais Theatre
22 Adel. Thebarton Theatre

RAMONES
Feb. Dates and Venues T.B.A.

LOU REED
Jan. 7 Syd. Ent. Cent.
10 Bris. Fest. Hall
12 Melb. Ent. Cent.
15 Auckland (NZ)

TINA TURNER
Nov. 23-30 Syd. Hilton
Dec. 3-8 Adel. Hilton
10-15 Melb. Hilton
18-23 Twin Town Services

WHAM
Jan. Dates and Venues T.B.A.



With
SPECIAL GUESTS

DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS

MELBOURNE
20 Prospect Hill
21 Billboard
22 The Venue
23 Ferntree Gully Hotel
24 Rock Garden, Central Club H.
25 Pier Hotel

SYDNEY
27 Chevron
28 St George Sailing Club
29 Aust. National Uni.
30 Shellharbour Workers
1 Selina's (Roxon)
2 Wentworthville Leagues
4 Dee Why Hotel
5 Bluegum Hotel

QUEENSLAND
6 Bombay Rock
7 Mansfield Tavern
8 Mooloolaba Hotel
9 Byron Bay Arts Factory (NSW)

N.S.W.

ACCESSORIES
24 Royal Hotel
30 Jewels Tav.
1 Dapto Leagues

AD LIB
23 Lismore Hotel
24 New York Tav.
25 General Bourke Hotel
29 Golden Grove Hotel
30 Stop And Rest
1 Nth. Syd. Leagues
2 Silverwater Speedboat
4 Collectors Tav.
6 Golden Grove Hotel

ALLNITERS
27 Collegians Rugby
28 Adamstown RSL
29 Cronulla Leagues
30 Local Inn
1 Doyalson RSL

AMAZING WOOLLOOMOOLOOSERS
24 Mona Vale Hotel
29 Bayview Hotel
30 Syd. Cove Tav.
1 Nelson Bay Police Boys

ANGELS
4 Western Sub. Leagues
5 Western Sub. Leagues

ARMS AND LEGS
23 Chevron
24 Carmens
25 Yoogali Club

AVION
23 Blacktown RSL
24 Palais Royale
30 Greenfields Tav.
1 Austral Bowling
4 Western Sub. Leagues
5 Western Sub. Leagues
6 Bayview Hotel

JIMMY BARNES
23 Cronulla Workers
24 Pt. Kembla Leagues
25 Chevron
27 Dubbo Civic Theatre
28 Lithgow Workers
30 Parkes Leagues
1 Orange Ex Services

THE BEATNIX
27 Tamworth Workers
28 Imperial Hotel, Armidale
29 Cambridge Tav.
30 Singleton Bowling
1 Blacktown RSL
5 Sweethearts
6 Local Inn

BIRDS OF PREY
23 Local Inn
30 Austral Bowling

THE BLEACH BOYS
23 Fraternity Bowling
24 Moss Vale Hotel
25 Ainslie Rugby (ACT)
30 Huccinson RSL
1 Campbelltown Leagues
2 Bath Arm Hotel

BOBBY SOX
23 Local Inn

KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
23 Rooty Hill RSL (Early)
23 Manzil (Late)
24 Campbelltown Leagues

BOSS
24 Syd. Cove Tav.

BRAIN CAPERS
29 Racecourse Hotel

BULLAMAKANKA
23 Newtown Leagues
24 Revesby Workers
25 Katoomba Services
26 Wellington Soldiers
27 Orange Ex Services
28 Hornsby RSL
29 Canb. Workers (ACT)
30 Canb. Irish (ACT)
1 Ourinbah RSL
2 Lithgow Workers
3 Oberon Leagues
4 Eastwood Hotel

CHAMPIONS
23 Governors Pleasure
30 Revesby Workers

CHOIRBOYS
30 Tourmaline Hotel
1 Chevron

COCKROACHES
23 Bluegum Hotel
26 St. James Tav.
5 Greenfields Tav.

THE CRYSTAL SET
23 The Gap
29 Strawberry Hill Hotel

CUCKOOS
23 Picadilly Hotel
29 Royal Hotel
1 Dee Why Hotel

D.D. SMASH
24 Chevron
28 Local Inn
29 Mona Vale Hotel
30 Fairfield RSL
1 Corrimal Leagues
5 Local Inn
6 Mona Vale Hotel

DO—RE—MI
30 Graphic Arts

DROPBEARS
27 Hordern Pavilion
29 Caringbah Inn
2 Parkway Hotel

DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
27 Chevron
28 St. George Sailing
29 ANU (ACT)
30 Shellharbour Workers
1 Selinas
2 Wentworthville Leagues
4 Dee Why Hotel
5 Bluegum Hotel

EDDY HALEY AND THE STARLIGHTERS
23 Royals Rugby (ACT)
24 Austral Bowling
28 Stallions
29 Didis
30 Syd. Cove Tav.
1 New York Tav.

ELEVEN ELEVEN
3 Picadilly Hotel
4 Manzil
5 Mosman Hotel
6 Strawberry Hill Hotel

JON ENGLISH
23 Bankstown Sports
24 Cardiff Workers
25 Cronulla Leagues

FAT TIME
26 AllNations Club
28 Palais Royale
29 Picadilly Hotel
30 Toronto Workers
1 Chevron
3 All Nations Club
6 Picadilly Hotel

FICTION ROMANCE
28 Sweethearts
1 Syd. Cove Tav.

FINGER GUN
23 Windsor Castle
25 Sutherland Ent. Cent.
1 Whitehorse Hotel

FLAMING HANDS
30 Emerton Youth Cent.
2 Western Sub. Leagues
4 Bankstown RSL
6 Nth. Ryde RSL

FOREVER 15
23 Chevron
24 Dapto Leagues
28 Goulburn Wine Bar
29 Belmont 16' Sailing
30 Collegians Rugby
1 Austral Bowling
5 Greenfields Tav.

THE FOSTER BROS
23 Bankstown Sports
24 Cardiff Workers
25 Cronulla Leagues

THE GENERATION
23 Illusions
24 Hawkesbury Sports
25 West Ryde Hotel
27 Sheilas
28 Cock And Bull
30 Illusions
1 Campbelltown Leagues
2 Bath Arm Hotel
4 Sheilas
5 Sweethearts
6 Bull And Bush

MARCIA HINES
27 Didis

HOI POLLOI
24 Governors Pleasure
25 Nth. Syd. Leagues
29 Caringbah Inn
30 Chevron
5 Picadilly Hotel

HUNGRY YOUNG MEN
24 Selinas (Early)
24 Manzil (Late)
25 Panthers
28 Didis
30 Governors Pleasure
1 Corrimal Leagues

ICEHOUSE
23 Shellharbour Workers
24 Blacktown RSL

I.Q.
23 St. Johns Hall, Padddington.
24 St. Johns Hall
25 The Rocks (Arvo)
29 Berry St. Plaza (Lunch)
1 Manly Corso (Arvo)
5 Sheilas

JOHN KENNEDY'S LOVE GONE WRONG
23 Strawberry Hill Hotel
26 St. James Tav.

JOHNNYS
23 Tourmaline Hotel
24 Goulburn Workers
29 Cronulla Workers
30 Manzil
1 Dee Why Hotel

JONES'
28 Hordern Pavilion

JUMP INCORPORATED
30 Greenfields Tav.
6 Manzil

KAM SHA
24 Blacktown RSL
1 Picadilly Hotel

PAUL KELLY
2 Strawberry Hill Hotel

LAUGHING CLOWNS
6 Cronulla Leagues

LAYABOUTS
23 Chester Hill Hotel
24 Cat And Fiddle (Arvo)
25 Graphic Arts
26 Didis
28 Beattie St.
30 Kincumber Hotel
1 Cat And Fiddle (Arvo)
1 Seven Hill Inn (Nite)
3 Didis
5 Beattie St.

LEFTOVERS
1 Syd. Cove Tav.

LETS POP
30 Cootamundra Count. Club
1 Catalina Count. Club
2 Manuka Rugby (ACT)

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS
23 Mosman Hotel
24 Royal Hotel
27 Dubbo Amaroo Hotel

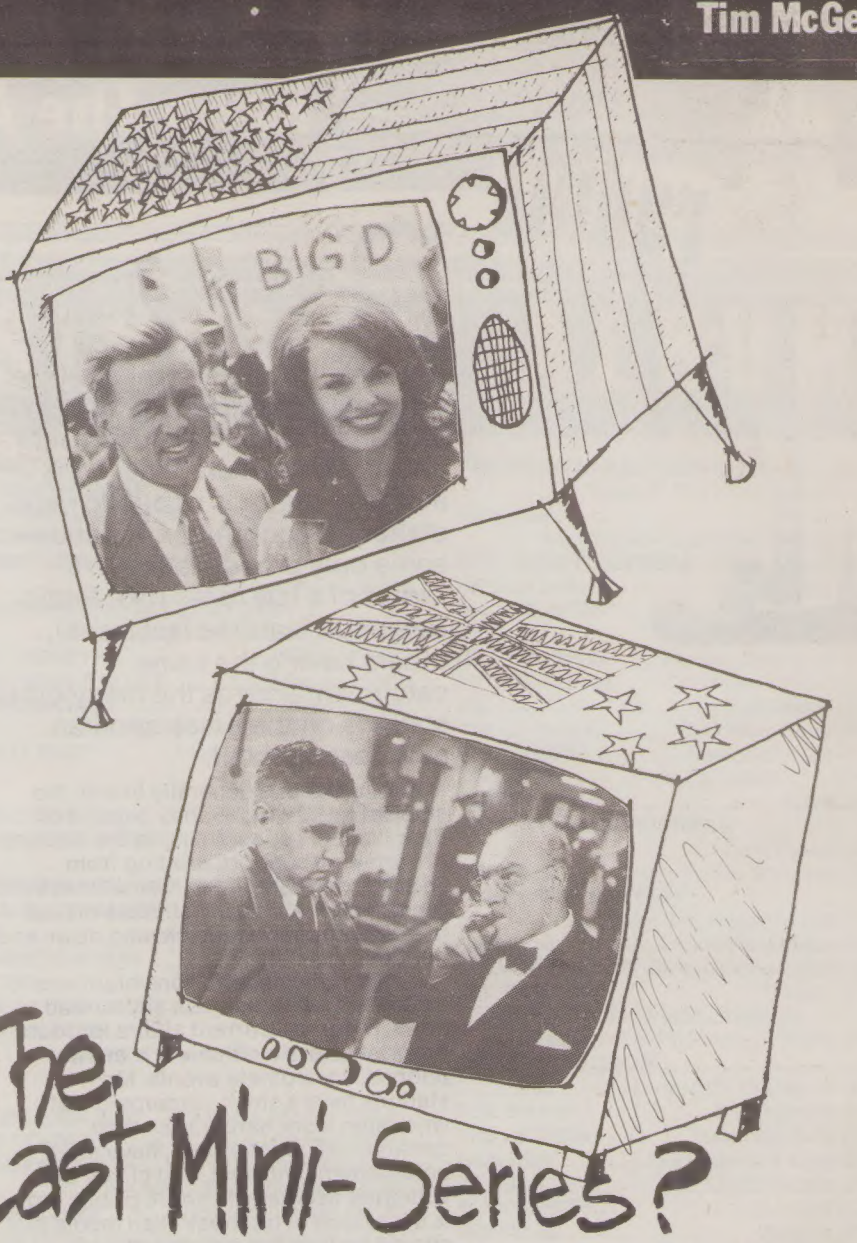
LIGHTNING ROCK
23 Austral Bowling
24 Highway Hotel
30 Royal Hotel

LIME SPIDERS
28 Dee Why Hotel
1 Carmens

LIQUID ENGINEERS
23 Shellharbour Workers
24 Local Inn
25 Caringbah Inn

TEEV

Tim McGee



The Last Mini-Series?

ONE reliable indication that a period of history has reached mythological status is its immortalisation in a mini-series. Who could forget the Eureka Stockade blockblustering into modern memories via a dose of Kingswood Countryesque beer guzzling and 'rally round the flag' campfire reveries? And a little later, the popularist union movement was exhumed in all its predictable "little man against a crooked system, m'lud" glory in the ghastly *Waterfront*.

More recently, the Don cracked willow against Imperial might all for the cause of patriotic bastardry in *Bodyline*, breaking records and ratings alike. We Australians seem to like our history direct from the textbooks, then dished up over three nights of prime time.

And on the strength of *Kennedy*, so do the Americans. This year's parting volley in the ratings war from the vain and glorious Nine empire, *Kennedy* roared across the screens of the nation like an out-of-control Sherman tank on a direct course for the heart of the myth. Held back criminally for twelve months until other networks were low on ammunition, it finally surfaced to salivating response from an audience of baby-boomers who lapped up its comforting sixties ambience, its politely dated fashions, its bitesized chunks of realism.

Treating history as television invariably leads to pacey rambles like *Kennedy*; to episodic jumpcuts, to exaggerated characterisation and hindsight-tinged moralising. Hell, if only he'd got rid of Hoover, told Jackie to shut her mouth, kept his head down in Dallas...

Naturally, JFK was played up as an amorous Bostonian nabob, a sidesplitting joker with the world on his shoulders and a hormone system more easily triggered than a Minuteman missile. Martin Sheen got the accent and the haircut just perfect, but there was something strangely wrong with his portrayal — something just didn't ring true. His disposition didn't quite gel, and his affairs seemed too distant and out of character. Had Joe Kennedy been more honestly portrayed for the hypocritical old fraud that he was, perhaps we could have swallowed the darker side of JFK a little more readily.

Jackie was of course the star of the show, as she was of the regime. Flouncing uncontrollably, she was admirably played by the admirable Blair Brown, recently seen being "harpooned by a monk in the act of receiving God" in the hilarious *Altered States*. Jackie has gone down in history as the cruelly robbed Genevieve in a dream Camelot, but it doesn't take a Charlie's Angel in a mini series called *Jackie* to tell us that the real story was a little different. She was a conceited and autocratic bitch, probably even hungrier for power and prestige than the entire Kennedy clan. One thought she was liable to begin biting the heads off small animals at any time, in the manner perfected by the 'Visitors' via the recently passed *V — The Final Battle*. But no, she was content with sneering at the public and spending more money on White House redecorating than anyone preceding the present celluloid inhabitants.

Of the rest of the cast, the conscientious Bobby and Ming The Merciless Hoover stood out. Bobby's heartfelt purity was overplayed to the point where butter was oozing from his every orifice and sick animals were seeking him out for guidance. At times he came over as a moralising prig, a cutesy liberal who backed his more pragmatic brother with something only just akin to a conscience. But at others he came over as the brave and decent man that he was in reality — naive but sincere.

His solemn words to Jack upon their learning that Jack's presidency was assured were an admixture of moody religious convictions and a quaint sense of the proprietary. Bobby tells Jack that now he's been elected "a Catholic President", his affairs with women will have to stop. As Hoover so succinctly put it, "the Kennedy weakness was sex", and Bobby knew it more than anyone.

TWENTY years before J.F.K. was running amok and invading Cuba, Australia fought its own war. Yep, that old Second World War has reared its ugly head again in yet another mini-series, *The Last Bastion*. This time round it was diggers in slouch hats, politicians in dusty pinstripes and Americans in armourplating with accents that would have been more at home in a grease trap.

Set amidst the feverish events of 1940-42, *The Last Bastion* concentrated as much on the infighting within Australia as it did on the efforts made on our behalf by the English (half-hearted and begrudging) and the Americans (momentous and a little less begrudging). It was a long and vicious crawl, three nights of torpor and occasional tedium — the visual equivalent of a Sunday stroll up the Kokoda trail sometime in the spring of 1942.

Most of *The Last Bastion* centred on the seen-to-be-selfless efforts of John Curtin, the wartime P.M. and closet worry wart. He was portrayed as the kind of amiable gent you'd expect to have as an uncle or be secretly bored with as a father-in-law. Curtin may have initially appeared limp and faltering, but by the end of the series he was an eloquent statesman bravely screaming from the battlements. Michael Blakemore played Curtin shakey but brave, as the most unlikely of fighters doing his best in the face of incredible pressure and a myriad of obstructions. But as with Martin Sheen's J.F.K., the portrayal lacked spark. Both seemed to be hollow leaders at times, mouthing speeches rather than firing them off the hip as we know both Curtin and Kennedy could do. Neither was conclusively believable as having united the masses at will; Curtin looked like he'd have a moral dilemma about putting the cat out at night, much less standing up to Churchill.

Max Cullen did his usual exemplary job with Eddie Ward, the left wing agitator and Curtin-baiter. Decked out in clothes that would look appropriate on Nick Cave or worse, Eddie Ward grumbled and spat incessantly in a wonderful caricature of blind political terrorism. His grumpy belligerence was matched only by the horrendous Billy Hughes, whose bitter harangues could well have been uttered by a psychotic circus dwarf schooled at King's and fed a diet consisting solely of raw rat flesh. History may prove me right on this point.

The strangest thing about *The Last Bastion* however — and admittedly there weren't many strange things in it — was the stylisation of the screenplay. Drafting in the notoriously tall David Williamson may make for good press, but it's not the guarantee of great television. Having recovered from his brush with patriotic excess on the grandiose *Gallipoli*, Williamson built *The Last Bastion* around research, weaving a palpable thread of circumstantial detail into a consistent, if necessarily contrived, scenario.

Since most of the decisionmaking shown in *The Last Bastion* took place behind closed doors a million miles from public awareness, a hell of a lot of the action seems to concern the writing of, the reading of, the discussing of, the arguing over... *cables*. Yes, the humble predecessor to the telegram has attained cult status! Williamson hangs a whole plot on the contents of cables — probably since it's these very documents that record the ebb and flow of tension, the tenuous state of our relations with Churchill and Roosevelt at the time. A scene would hardly pass without a cable being drafted or dispatched; one almost expected Curtin to palm off his wife back home in Perth with a cursory weekly cable — but no, we are reliably informed, he did use the more civilised telephone.

Misgivings aside, *The Last Bastion* was indeed 'good television', as it was also 'pretty good history'. It pulled no punches nor deferred to traditional war reportage; the true hero in this aspect was the marvellously evoked Blamey, the long lost Australian General.

The Last Bastion may have struggled and wept over a handful of cables, but it also bled real blood. *Kennedy*, a far more tricky proposition, slicker, seamier and racier, cried only a bucket of crocodile tears and smelt of hairspray and compromise. But at least it didn't have anyone as laughable as Warren Mitchell, who attempted an American accent for *The Last Bastion* and never quite got the egg off his chops.

Hmmmm, the Last Mini-Series? Maybe I'll take my Manning Clarke straight next time, no ice.

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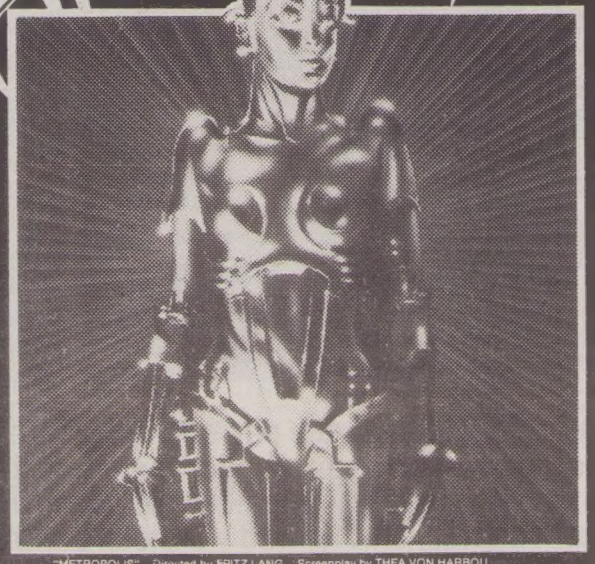
AND THE RESULT?...

METROPOLIS



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radioz

2SER RADIOTHON ALERT! — Keep The Airwaves Alive

PUBLIC RADIO is exactly that — a broadcasting service that operates for the benefit and enjoyment of the listener, as opposed to the benefit and financial gain of advertisers and station owners. There are literally hundreds of public radio stations throughout Australia — some only broadcasting to a radius of a few miles (like Radio Bellinger, featured last issue), others having the same catchment area as the many other stations on their metropolitan broacasting band.

Public stations generally live on the smell of an oily rag — they depend on their listeners subscribing to the station, government support, funding from educational institutions. Sometimes even the sale of T-shirts and stickers makes the difference between closing down and continuing.

Public radio depends on volunteers to organise music, maintain shifts, read news, report on current affairs, produce programmes, do office work, answer phones, co-ordinate events. Most stations have a small, underpaid staff who often work harder than their commercial counterparts, have more commitment and soul, and closer ties with their listeners. In short, public radio is a tradition of the Australian media that should be loved and nurtured, not ignored and ridiculed as it so often is.

2SER-FM, which broadcasts from the 107.5 mhz band in Sydney (but can often be received throughout NSW and as far away as Melbourne), is one of the most respected public radio stations in Australia. 2SER turns five years old this month, and will be celebrating — in traditional public radio station style — with a radiothon (23rd-25th November), to raise funds to help keep it going until this time next year.

At radiothon time — when the funds are low and the ideas are racing — it's time to re-assess where the station is going, and what it has achieved. According to Virginia Madsen (Station-Initiated Programmes Producer), 2SER has provided the Sydney radio scene with a truly unique voice, a station that stimulates musically, educationally and aurally. Virginia can't find a suitable word to summarise the music policy — she says that to describe it as "educational or intelligent would be a real turn-off. I can imagine how people would react if they thought we considered ourselves *musically* educational. But we provide many specialist music programmes that you just cannot find anywhere else.

"What makes them so special is the fact that they are done by *specialists* — not some announcer who has been given the shift."

Besides interesting music, with a heavy emphasis on Australian artists — anything from demos to mainstream — 2SER provides fascinating magazine programmes every afternoon of the week. These are genuine alternatives to the usual "drive time" radio drivel — running from 4 until 6, the magazine shows feature a different emphasis each afternoon, ranging from Media to Entertainment. As well as interviews, gossip, news and information, you get great music, intelligent comment, and the occasional in-studio joke (or mistake) that makes listening such a spontaneous pleasure.

Public radio is often criticised as purveying a "bleeding heart liberal" attitude. People say its protagonists will whinge about anything — be it the state of the recording industry, creches and childcare for working women, uranium, or even funding for public radio. Stephen Sheutz, who has just joined 2SER as Training Producer, disagrees vehemently with this view.

"I could level a similar criticism at the commercial media. They only show us what they want us to see. Look, part of being a progressive movement is to look at the conflicts in our society. If you don't, how can you facilitate discussion and solutions? This station celebrates the victories of progressive movements as much as it fights the causes."

Virginia Madsen: "We point people in the right direction. We try and help them find solutions for problems, and let them know where they can get assistance. It's part of providing a community radio station that belongs to everyone."

Leah Haynes, who has been one of the most active volunteers at the station for the last few years, has the unenviable job of co-ordinating the upcoming radiothon. She must transform an otherwise ordinary weekend into a vibrant, pulsating, exciting 52-hour marathon of laughs, jokes and bribes. Having been a volunteer at 2SER for quite some time, receiving no financial reward for her considerable efforts, Leah knows the importance of money.

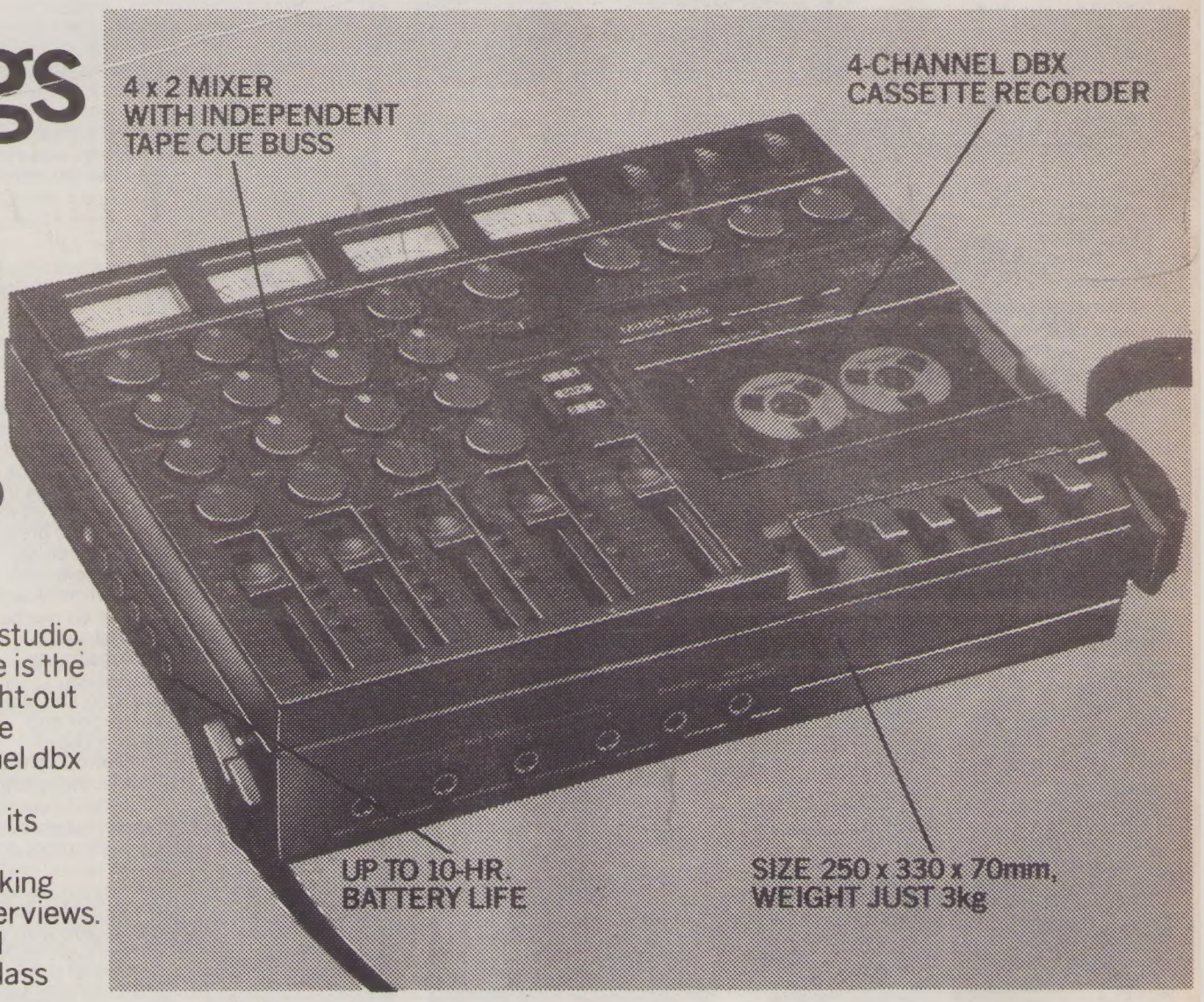
"If people don't subscribe, *we close.* We need people to ring up with donations of any amount, to come along to the concert on the 30th of November, to listen to the station and *become involved.* Without the money, we go under."

Help keep 2SER afloat by supporting the Radiothon (Nov. 23-25), and attending the post-Radiothon party on November 30. With Do-Re-Mi, the Champions and Seamonsters on the bill at Sydney's Graphic Arts Club, you'll doubtless find it a pleasure.

MARY WALSH

Good things are worth waiting for.

The brilliant new Tascam Ministudio Porta One.



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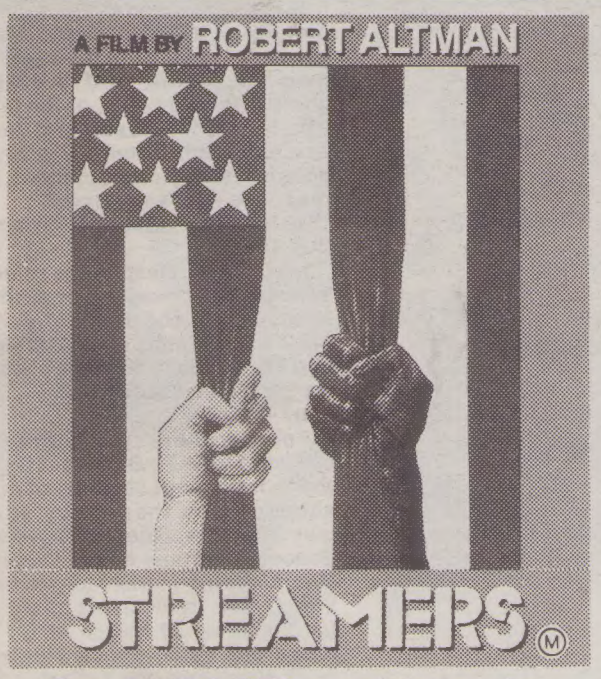
TEA 1002

L.A. DESPATCH

Cary Darling

(Pix: LFI)



From DAVID RABE'S award winning play.
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The finely-knit cast is an impeccable reminder of what accomplished screen acting is all about. 'Streamers' is Robert Altman's best film in years."
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BR-U-U-U-U-U-U-CE! The constant cry is till ringing in my ears, and no doubt the echo will be heard for a long time in Los Angeles after **Bruce Springsteen**'s seven-night stand at the 15,000-seater Los Angeles Sports Arena. Though I'm still not a big fan of Springsteen's all-American working class angst, there's no getting around the fact that he is a consummate entertainer who hasn't yet acceded to the trappings of the music industry major leagues.

Who could not have been moved by the sight of row after row of handicapped veterans at the opening night of *The River* tour four years ago? On that tour, he often spoke of the plight of the forgotten Vietnam War veterans, while this time around he has been raising funds for an unemployed steelworkers' Foodbank. Several times during his four-hour performances (including intermission), he urged his fans to support the Foodbank which had set up several tables in the lobby.

Yet, Bruce has been smart enough (so far) to not align himself with any particular party or movement. In fact, on his opening stand here, a group of Democratic Socialists held up a banner outside the auditorium proclaiming Bruce as a 'fellow traveller', much to the consternation of some of his fans. (I guess, to them, *Born In The U.S.S.R.* doesn't quite have the same ring). When the banner blew down, the crowd cheered. So, while much of Springsteen's audience has little political awareness (donations to the Foodbank fund in Los Angeles were reportedly low in comparison to other cities back East), Springsteen refuses to say "Follow me!" and lead his troops towards trying to establish some proletarian paradise. God knows with the devotion of his fans, if he abused his power, it could be rather dangerous.

Beyond that, the music was first-rate — where does this guy get his stamina from? He varies the show from night to night, sometimes performing songs which he rarely does anymore — as on October 29, when he played *Candy's Room* and *The Night*. Rather disturbingly, some parts of his show are tending to the formulaic at this point: the sliding on his knees into a waiting **Clarence Clemmons** at the end of *Thunder Road*, the pulling of a woman from the audience at the end of *Dancing In The Dark* (just like in the video), or the endless oldies medley he does as a final encore. How many times can *you* hear *Devil With The Blue Dress On* or *Twist And Shout* without becoming vomitously ill?

THE arrival of Springsteen — to some, the equivalent of Jesus Christ deciding to tour — overshadowed other shows in town equally impressive in their ways. A contingent of Australians — the **Hoodoo Gurus**, the **Church** and the **Moodists** — created a small plash on the club scene.

The Gurus were the most heralded of the three, coming off a number one LP on the college radio charts for six weeks. I'm told this should translate into about 50,000 units sold — not bad for a band no-one had heard of until a few weeks ago. Their enjoyable show at the Club Lingerie was like a 60s pop convention with ex-critic/ex-Bomp head Brian Jones lookalike **Greg Shaw**, gadfly **Kim Fowley**, ex-Cheap Trick **Tom Petersen**, **Marty Wilsson-Piper** and **Richard Ploog** all grovelling at the foot of the stage.

The funny thing is that the Gurus are signed directly to A&M — the label which released several Australian bands on its Oz subsidiary, yet none of them went anywhere. Now, they pick up an Australian band, their first since Oz folded, and the group seems to be headed somewhere — even if it's only large-scale cult success.

The Moodists' first L.A. date was also at the Lingerie, opening for (get this) **Sam Moore**, of **Sam & Dave** fame. Not only that, it was rumoured that since this was one of Br-u-u-u-ce's nights off, he was going to stop by for a jam with Mr. Moore. To the disappointment of many, that didn't happen. Surprisingly, the Moodists caused little excitement in L.A. considering that **Nick Cave** (to whom the Moodists are often compared here) has been virtually adopted by the pale'n'hip set as a virtual hometown boy.

My personal favourite show was the Church at the Palace. With little advance press, the quartet drew a respectable (and surprisingly knowledgeable crowd) and performed a brilliant set, playing material from nearly all phases of their career. The 90-minute show proved Kilbey and company to be excellent players, and Kilbey himself — despite his reputation in Australia — came off as humble and genuinely appreciative of the hearty applause. Now, only if Warner Bros. here would get behind *Remote Luxury*. There is even talk of the label releasing *The Blurred Crusade* and *Seance* (heretofore only available on import) in the U.S.

The height of ironies, for an Australiaphile like myself, is that the Church and The Moodists were playing on the same night. Who would have thought?

TOM PETTY fans are waiting on pins and needles to see if the singer/guitarist recovers from his self-inflicted hand injury several weeks back. If he doesn't, it could mean the end of his strumming days.

While listening to a playback of a track off his new *Southern Accents* album, Petty became so enraged that he slammed his left fist into a wall, breaking several bones in the process. He was rushed to a San Fernando Valley hospital and then to Cedars-Sinai Hospital in West Hollywood, where he underwent a four-hour operation. The new album's release date has now been pushed back to early 1985. As for its subject matter, it's a rumoured departure from his previous work as some of the songs are the result of collaborations with Eurythmic **Dave Stewart**.

Jane Wiedlin has left the Go-Go's to pursue a solo career. Bassist **Kathy Valentine** is switching to guitar, so now the band is looking for a bassist.

Mr. T, everyone's favourite hulk, has two albums out. One, for Columbia, is called *Mr. T's Commandments* and features the Mohawked Wonder rapping his way through such hits as *No Dope, No Drugs* and *Don't Talk To Strangers*. The other LP, for MCA, is for classroom use and is called *The Lifetime Learning System*. The idea behind this package is to instill in fourth and fifth grade children 'a sense of their own strengths, talents, and abilities'. Also provided is a supplement to take home, so that parents can take part in the programme. The initial single is *Treat Your Mother Right*. Buy it, fool!

The cable TV wars have begun, with MTV copping its first real challenge. **Ted Turner**, who runs Cable News Network, is getting into fulltime video music with his 24-hour Cable Music Network, while another organisation is starting the Discovery Channel. Both have said they are avoiding heavy metal and "offensive" videos in favour of more black, jazz, country, and 'adult contemporary' videos. In other words, they are aiming for an older audience than MTV's suburban new wavey headbangers. When MTV got wind of this — (Whaaat?! Somebody challenge our monopoly?!) — they announced VH-1, an adult videomusic channel. Meanwhile, Discovery has filed suit against MTV for its recently-initiated policy of securing exclusives on videos for up to 30 days (*sound familiar? — Ed.*). If the courts rule in MTV's favour, this could definitely hurt all video music shows — but especially the 24-hour ones. All of the channels should be on the air by January 1, and the competition promises to be cut-throat.

WELL, the weather's finally cooled off, the smog has lifted (Gee, I didn't know Los Angeles was surrounded by mountains) and the final nail has been driven into the coffin of the local punk scene. **Cathay de Grande**, the Chinese restaurant turned new romantic hangout turned punk den, closed its doors two days before Halloween. The club has been fighting an uphill battle for the last three years — seems police harassment, neighbours, belligerence and industry indifference were too much for the club to bear, so the owners agreed to close voluntarily. Now there is no regular place for punk bands to play.

However, the punks probably bear some responsibility for their fate. Many of them — probably a minority — are not the best behaved bunch. A final note of irony — the club's last night was supposed to be Halloween, but the owners were afraid of what might have happened on the official closing night, so — without a word to anyone — they closed on October 29, after a set by the bluesy **Top Jimmy and the Rhythm Pigs**, and just never re-opened. An era has ended.

The SPIKES

(Pic: Tom Takacs)

A Stab In The Guts of Rock'n'Roll!

THE music world appears to be divided into two clearly marked camps: those who claim to play rock and roll, and those who profess a keen desire to *kill it*. The Spikes know where they stand. On the extreme end of the rock'n'roll disciple scale, this band not only claim to play rock'n'roll — they worship, understand and live it.

The term often comes up in discussion with Doug Thomas and Greg Swanborough — it's the pivot for all conversation. If the rest of the band were present at the interview, they would doubtlessly show as much dedication to the rock'n'roll ideal as Greg and Doug.

Although they claim to be a rock'n'roll band, the Spikes are actually considerably more than that. The sound generated from the stage — and to a lesser extent from their records — is a lurching, thunderous boil-in-the-bag slab of filth that depends as much on feedback as it does chord structure. During an ordinary night, the Spikes will cross the demarcation lines of boogie, heavy metal, swamp and plain old anarchy.

For this reason, it's hard to swallow Doug's claim that the Spikes are merely a "damn good rock'n'roll band", and little else. Surely — given the stigma attached to the term in this day and age — he could come up with a better description?

This is where things get murky. What *is* rock'n'roll, anyway? Who can define the governing word of the contemporary music scene? All Doug knows is that rock'n'roll is a gut feeling — an emotion expressed physically through playing an instrument or singing, and driven home by the actual song.

"It's hard to define. It's not content, that's for sure — Chuck Berry's lyrics prove that. What did he ever say? *Bang Shang A Lang.* What are the greatest rock and roll lyrics ever written?. . . *A Wop Bop Alu Bop A Wop Bam Boom.* Words don't have much to do with rock and roll. I can't say it enough — it's a *gut feeling.*"

So at what stage did the Spikes discover that they had what it took to be a "damn good rock'n'roll band"? Doug says that after the first few rehearsals in Adelaide in early 1983, he knew the band were "great". Although both Doug and Greg claim that Adelaide remained almost completely aloof for about a year, a lot of people on the east coast had begun to hear about the band through word of mouth and live reviews.

It wasn't until *She's Melting* was released in September last year — and the subsequent screening of the video on *Rock Around The World* — that more Australians got to see exactly what these Spikes were up to. *She's Melting* was an aimlessly downbeat quasi-swamp tune that took forever to get where it was going, but nevertheless showed flashes of brilliance and a ton of promise along the way.

At around about the same time as the release of that single, the band supported the brilliant (though erratic) Gun Club, and found they shared similar ideas and approaches with Jeffrey Lee Pierce, Kid Congo and Patricia Morrisson. This new-found empathy soon extended to other LA bands, most of whom Doug and Greg (to a lesser extent) greatly admire. To Doug, they have exhumed the almost-buried spirit of rock'n'roll and given it new life — just like the Spikes were attempting.

In fact, such is the power of rock'n'roll (here we go again!) that both Doug and Greg swear they've heard one of their songs performed twice by LA bands. There's no animosity — Doug just sees it as a mutual recognition of what constitutes great rock'n'roll.

"We had been doing *Hollywood*" (the focal point of July release *Six Sharp Cuts*, described overly harshly by one critic as a 'formless workout') "for about four months and then I heard these two LA bands do the same song — exactly — the same chord structure, the lot. They were the Dream Syndicate and Truw West — the *same goddamn song*. This proves just how good this music is."

WOULDN'T the band prefer to do something they could call their own? Make some sort of token effort to explore and extend the mouldy old parameters of rock'n'roll? They reckon originality comes from emotionalism, injecting one's own persona into the basic framework.

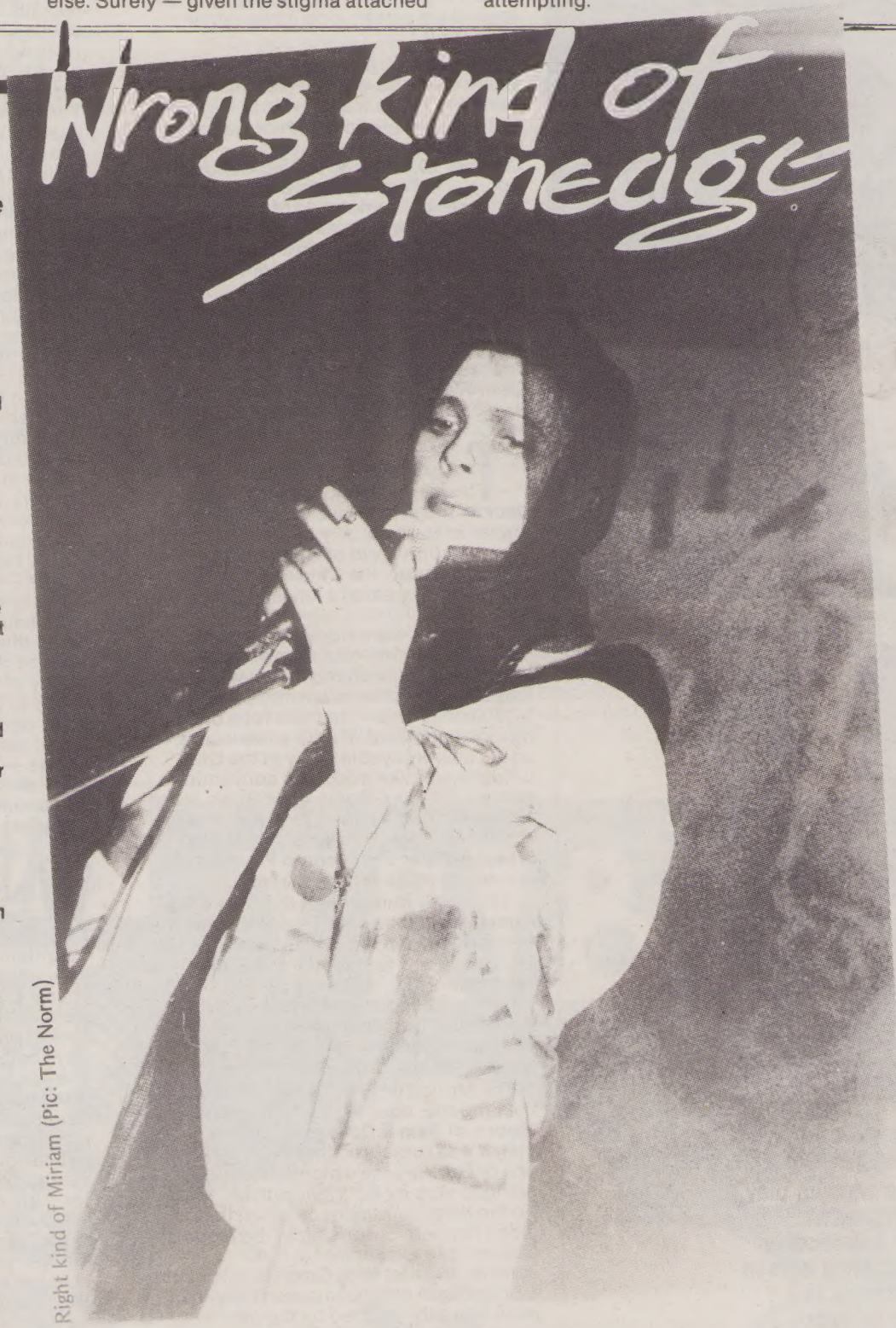
Doug's emotional imput is his trademark, along with earsplitting feedback and distortion. As he maintains, "We're not great musicians. Well, I think Greg's a great drummer, but technically I'm not a good guitar player, but I can change chords fast enough for our purposes. I don't consciously avoid becoming any good, it's just that I've gotten good enough for what this band wants. Although sometimes when someone turns up with a more complex song than we've never done before, we have to go a bit slow while I figure it out.

"But, my specialty is *noise* — be it feedback or dischordant mess. I don't use it to cover up technical inadequacy, it's just a different form of playing. It adds class, real class."

The next big step for the Spikes is a US release, where they're sure — given the chance — they'll be received with interest. In what's possibly the only country that still holds the rock'n'roll ideal close to its heart, the Spikes will probably do swell.

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF

Wrong Kind of Stoneage



Right kind of Miriam (Pic: The Norm)

PICTURE if you will the wet interior of Papua New Guinea, circa the fifties. For the first time, white men make contact with head-hunting tribespeople. In awe, they behold a culture unmoved by the tides of 'progress'.

"It. . . it's a wrong kind of stoneage," gasps one intrepid explorer.

Gavin and Miriam had tired of the speed of life within the city. They decided it was time to look for somewhere green, to sit down, cool out, and find new directions for the band they had created.

Since Wrong Kind of Stoneage's inception in the early winter of '82, a lot had gone down. *Grace And Grossness*, a ten-track cassette made entirely independently "in order to expose that great farce — the Australian Music Industry", was a fair representation of the early W.K.O.S.A.; rough, but with its heart in the right place, and light years ahead (in the interest dept.) of most copyist dross available at the time.

The art of the drone and chant is where this music lives, and as the band gathered resources through gigging and day-jobs, they thought a bit of vinyl might help their evolution.

So it was that *Flying Low To Batavia* appeared on Wrong Kind Of Records, featuring the haunting chant of *Shadow*, the post-punk-punk *Run Amok*, and the magically primeval *Toil* (made even more so live with Marija on violin). Recorded on eight-track (Fatboy Studios) with Miriam on vocals, Gavin effecting guitars, Geoff on bass and Battersea controlling the sticks, the whole project was approached in a highly professional manner. Gavin and Miriam turned up a pressing plant (Sheard and Co.) that produced vinyl like it used to feel (good and thick), so ensuring a long life for their efforts.

WISEMAN'S FERRY is not far from Sydney in a spatial sense, but in temporal vein it has moved little in mood since the Hawkesbury Valley was drowned. Primordial mists cling to the river as the ferry — a piece of road that floats — delivers us as if in Myth to our desired shore. A Buddhist monk in saffron robes and shaven head stares after us from the seat of his truck, before roaring off to the monastery nearby.

His presence fits the mood of mystery in this valley, and adds to the air of anticipation, the feeling of *something waiting*, that seems to pour from the very rocks about. On Settler's Road, the gravestones of the white folk stand mute by a bend in the river, and the ghosts of the blacks they supplanted sing on the wind — all equal in death.

It is amidst this atmosphere that Miriam and Gavin have set up home, the river at the bottom of their garden showing which way the tide is running, and knowing that it has temporarily turned for them. Yup, W.K.O.S.A. Mk 2 has passed beyond, but W.K.O.S.A. Mk 3 only awaits the proper moment to re-incarnate.

"It all got to be too much," offers Miriam. "Organising transport, PAs and all that, and then getting nothing for all the effort while some publican cleans up."

"I'll second that," seconds Gavin.

Throughout the weekend we spent together, the pair constantly talked of the Big Picture (you know, the WORLD), refusing to partake of the localised bickerings of inner city band life. Their interests are extensive — musically and literally — with the sounds of ancient tribes never far from the cassette machine, usually hard on the heels of some classical piece, or the latest offering from Siouxsie and the Banshees — a band both admire. But when I tried to get an 'interview' out of them, the only response I got was "Spam".

"Yeah, Spam," laughed Miriam. "Print that."

It's printed. Despite the reluctance to talk about themselves, or perhaps *because* of it, the music of W.K.O.S.A. Mk 3 will certainly reflect energies Gavin and Miriam have absorbed in their time up the Hawkesbury. *(But will it come in a can? — Ed.)*

For now, there are a few dozen copies of *Flying Low To Batavia* lodged firmly in the independent sections of most import shops around the country, so dive in and give it a listen. Gnomic boy-wonder Bruce Griffiths — he of *Flowers From The Dustbin* fame — has included a W.K.O.S.A. track on his new compilation (entitled *Not So Humdrum*), along with cuts from the Happy Hate-Me-Nots, Vigil-Anti, the X-Certs and many more, so you can check out W.K.O.S.A.'s work in relation to that of their contemporaries. I think you'll find it wrong enough for any taste. Here's to the new Stoneage!

(The last appearance of the old Stoneage takes place on December 14, when they'll perform for yet another Radio Sydney Benefit at Sydney's Hellenic Hall along with P.S.I. and others.)

THE NORM

Not Dead, Only Resting
No Crash, Just Flying Low

PARIS GREEN

(Pic: Lisa Walker)

— Sparring On Broadway, Soon For London!

THE BROADWAY Hotel — funnily enough on Broadway, in Sydney — seems to occupy some sort of special place in Australian boxing lore. The walls of the front bar are lined with action shots of our pugilistic greats, such as Lionel Rose, Johnny Famechon and Tony Mundine. Peter Corris, creator of private detective Cliff Hardy and chronicler of the square ring in Australia, even makes mention of the pub in his latest book, *The Winning Side* (about an Aboriginal tent fighter), so it must be. . .

But on Thursday nights over the last month or two, the Broadway has given itself over to a different preoccupation — music. The place is packed with faces familiar and not so, but the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed.

Out of the crowd emerge a few scruffy figures who prepare themselves and their equipment in the corner. More familiar faces: behind the drumkit is Jeffrey Wegener, Laughing Clowns' rhythmic lynchpin; Louis Tillet, frontman for the Wet Taxis, huddles over the piano keyboard; the electric bassist is a guy called Raoul Hawkins, Keys Music Association alumnus. A tune starts picking up — *Parchment Farm*, the Mose Allison classic.

Wegener's drumming is crisp and loose, it swings and kicks, while the bass of Hawkins alternately moves in a stroll, a shuffle or longer strides. Louis Tillet pounds out the riff, punctuating a nasal yet cool vocal, and then takes off in a flight of ivory improvisational fancy. The trio take turns in taking the tune higher, and then they take it out. The audience is ecstatic. Welcome to the world of Paris Green. . .

Paris Green cover a gamut of material ranging from John Lee Hooker to John Coltrane, Ray Charles to Nina Simone, to what Louis Tillet calls his own 'medieval blues' originals. Before the night is through, there will be as many as nine musicians on the floor — four horn players (among them Louise Elliot of the Clowns plus past or present members of Upside Down House, Kill The King and Great White Noise), a guitarist (Greg Jordan, of Rose Tattoo!), and a female vocalist (Rebecca Hancock, from Watusi Now) as well as the basic trio. The tradition of 'sitting-in' is alive and well within Paris Green, and it makes for an even more exciting potential. On this occasion, they end up steaming like James Brown's Famous Flames!

"They literally come out of nowhere, it's a real marvel," Louis Tillet tells me later. "All these really accomplished musicians I think are incredibly frustrated. I know from playing in the Wet Taxis — even though I loved it, it was restrictive. And I think all these people come along because it's a chance to express themselves.

"This sort of music — because it's unrehearsed — demands that the musicians listen to one another. Whereas in a lot of rock bands, no-one listens to anyone — they just belt away. In Paris Green, an instrumentalist will go off, and the onus is on everyone else to follow that person and make the solo work, so it's real co-operation. In Paris Green, we're always trying to make everyone else's playing sound better."

"So in that way," Jeffrey Wegener intercedes, "this band is more than just the members in it, it's something that provides quite a unique sort of service. That encourages creativity and the idea of working together, and that's one of the best things about it. It's quite a phenomenon in its own small way."

"It's more than just a group trying to build an image or a reputation," Tillet continues, "trying to 'make it'. It's quite different to that — it's really just for the music and the musicians, and the people who are interested in listening."

TILLET and Wegener put Paris Green together around the middle of this year, when both the Wet Taxis and the Laughing Clowns were off the road.

"We were really tentative about it initially," Wegener recalls, "so we just had a blow, we just improvised, and we came out of it incredibly confident because we enjoyed it so much; and we realised we could actually do it, improvise together."

How did you arrive at a repertoire?

"It was just songs we happened to know, songs we liked," says Tillet. "Most of the material we do though, the songs are almost irrelevant — it's basically just a simple tune, the barest minimum of a song. We just take a bit of a melody line and a chord progression and go from there."

"The first tune I played with Louis was *Parchment Farm*," adds Wegener, "and that's interesting because it sort of explains the essence of the group, insofar as it's a tune written by Mose Allison that's been done in a rock context; but at the same time it's a swing thing, so you have rock and jazz sort of meeting. And really, when you come down to it, this band's been an attempt to be unclassifiable, even though it has relied heavily on some traditional things — like the blues, and r'n'b."

"The first night we played, on the first floor of the Trade Union Club," Tillet takes up the story, "there were a whole lot of people like the Celibate Rifles there — basically a rock'n'roll audience — and they really liked it. It seems to be able to cross over — like, the old diggers in the pub like it, the sort of groovy people like it, and the rock'n'rollers like it.

"I think it shows basically how bored a lot of people are with the stereotypes. Around Sydney anyway. Like, if you go to see a jazz band down at the Basement it's an incredible stereotype, if you go to see a rock band at the Chevron it's an incredible stereotype, most of which are really uninteresting."

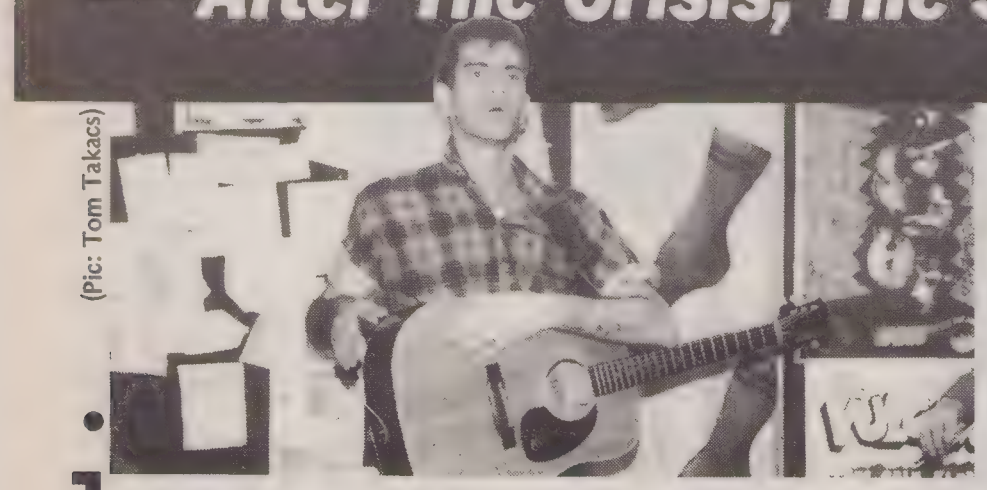
The immediate popularity of Paris Green is certain proof of that point. At the moment, the group holds down a residency at the Palace Hotel in Darlinghurst on Sunday afternoons, as well as the one at the Broadway (admission is free at both), and the only potential danger is that they become *too* popular, and overcrowded.

The group will continue gigging around Sydney — as far as other commitments allow — until Jeffrey Wegener leaves for London with the Laughing Clowns in January. Before that though, they intend to put down an album, 'live in the studio', for Hot Records. Then, early next year — with Louis Tillet and Greg Jordan both destined for London as well as Wegener and Louise Elliot — Paris Green will take up there where they left off here. London's gain is Sydney's loss.

CLINTON WALKER

JOHN KENNEDY

— After The Crisis, The Solo Battle



(Pic: Tom Takacs)

JFK and the Cuban Crisis were one of those bands that most people found pretty easy to ignore. They didn't have an outstanding image, real personality or demanding presence. They were just another band struggling in the style-conscious Sydney inner city — shamelessly thrashing their faceless pop to a largely uninterested populace.

JFK's fifteen minutes of fame occurred in late 1982 when they released their *Careless Talk Costs Lives* EP, and one song, *Texan Thing*, caught the imagination of public radio stations around the country. However, most listeners thought they were hearing the new Elvis Costello single, and confusion reigned in record bars while hapless assistants rang radio stations and record companies trying to track down this unheard-of track.

John Kennedy — singer with JFK, now solo artiste and subject of this article — wasn't as all fazed by the Costello comparison. "I find it flattering, especially from the songwriting point of view. Elvis is a huge, huge power in the popular field — a tremendous crafter of the area, and he is an influence."

When JFK split earlier this year, the hothouse conditions of the incestuous (but now decaying) inner-city music scene provided fertile ground for rumour, speculation and plain old bitching about various members of the band and the reason for the breakup. John says that while he's not totally un-scarred by the experience, many of the suggestions of megalomania, petty jealousies and ego wars (among other traumas) were news to him.

Also, he says, he was far too close to the situation to see it as anything other than normal. JFK was John's first band — he didn't really know how other bands handled their affairs. As it was, most of the bitching went on OUTSIDE the JFK camp, and the four members managed to maintain some sort of convivial atmosphere whilst winding it all up.

JFK's debut (and as it happens, farewell) album was finished off as the band were finishing themselves off. *The End Of The Affair* was months in the making — held up by lack of money, studio time and the usual outside considerations. Unfortunately, the end result highlights the drawn-out process. The album sounds inspired in parts, dull in others, but when all is said and done, it's fairly representative of what JFK were about —searching ballads, hook-less rambles through the pop expression. After the album was released, JFK — who hadn't played for ages anyway — decided to go on their official farewell tour, also dubbed 'The End Of The Affair'. John remembers this as one of the happiest periods in the band's four year existence.

"It had always been a pretty uneasy relationship, and I think that that really shows up on the album. Some of it I was really happy with, generally though, there's no direction as far as performance and production goes. The uneasy relationship in the band, the album, plus unhappiness in my personal life, all of it led to the demise of JFK."

SO NOW John has gotten out of the cab and has decided to drive his own car for a while — maybe permanently. He's recorded a solo single, *Forget* b/w *End Of The Affair*, and has set up some Sydney gigs with a backing band called Love Gone Wrong.

"This way people can just yell out directions. 'Turn right!' 'Turn left!' But I get to say yes or no."

As the single indicates, John has also developed his up-until-now passing interest in country music. ("Just popular artistes — Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, early Elvis and even some gospel stuff").

There was a hint of country beginning to seep into latter-day JFK material, but now that John has managed to spend some more time listening — and talking — to people who know their country music, he's been able to pinpoint exactly what it is in the genre that's so attractive to him.

Graham Lee, who plays bluegrass dobro on the new single, has a substantial record collection that John has carefully plundered. He had also suggested country style emphases in the studio with positive effect, and — big bonus — he knows several country singers who are on the lookout for material. John has reacted quickly by writing a few tunes for possible inclusion on yer basic true blue country albums.

Writing, however, doesn't come all that easy. John says that as he's not very prolific, his writing hasn't taken any severe turns since the JFK split. He's re-discovered unfinished, forgotten songs that he's only just now completing, and he's also included some older JFK songs in his solo set. Since the release of *Forget* (maudlin love song, impossible not to like, heavy emphasis on dobro & double bass), John has spent hours on the phone and on foot persuading radio stations to play it. With enthusiasm that can almost be labelled old-fashioned, he has approached the "selling" of the single — and himself — quite seriously.

He's had long, enlightening but ultimately unsatisfactory conversations with radio programmers from every conceivable station (2KY to 2SM) and is now figuring out how to get the single heard — given that the response has been overwhelmingly negative. Is this dedication — never evident in such large amounts when he was with JFK — purely because he's now in complete control, and the record is his, all his?

"Yes, to an extent. I really don't know how self-indulgent it is wanting material you release to be heard, or wanting your public image to be a true expression of what you're thinking. I like what I'm doing now, and I'm in a position to be honest with the things that I do, and have people receive them the way that they will.

"If people think that Honest John Kennedy is a pretentious prat, then, oh well. But as my mother used to say, as long as you're happy with what you're doing John, then that's all that matters."

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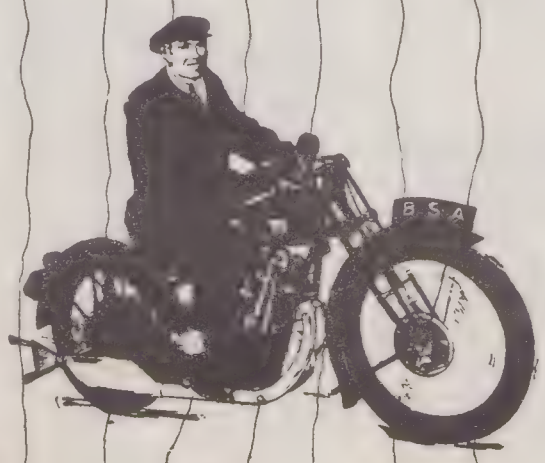

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MIRRORS OF DISTORTION

Theatre of the Grotesque — that time-honoured tradition of absurdist parody — has its own local exponents in the RED WEATHER troupe. ADELE BARNETT holds a mirror to its protagonists and discovers a pair of visionary satirists, plus a composer who refuses to recognise conventional musical boundaries.

THEATRE of the Grotesque has its roots in time as old as mythology. In ancient Rome, with its satyrs and the distorted carnivale figures of the Mediterranean, through to the court jesters of medieval northern Europe, buffoonery developed as an anarchic way to parody contemporary society and get away with it.

The Buffoon is a monstrously deformed mutant being which exists to remind us that — despite our highly developed physical and moral codes of social acceptability — we are still not far removed from bestiality.

So the Buffoon is a distorted mirror, through which we look at ourselves darkly. The Buffoon makes us laugh, and in that moment of laughter, the truth of what we are seeing will catch in the throat.

The Buffoon is a clown, a jester and. . . Heironymous Bosch.

RED WEATHER is a troupe of buffoons with a new show at the Seymour Downstairs Theatre, aptly titled Whistling In The Dark. Red Weather has brought the concept of Theatre of the Grotesque to Australia. Instant acceptance by clamouring audiences greeted its first performance in Sydney early last year. Then they did Keep The Dream Running for last year's Sydney Festival, toured it around and returned it to Sydney again.

Italian Nicoletta Boris and Australian Andrew Lindsay, the cornerstones of Red Weather, met at the Jacques LeCoq School of Mime Theatre in Paris a few years ago. Andrew was a disillusioned journalist-turned-clown, and Nicoletta a travelling actor and mask-maker. The Buffoon being a speciality of the LeCoq School, the two found it an excellent basis for their work. After Andrew returned to Australia, Nicoletta worked with the famous Satori mask-making and installation theatre workshop in Venice, which involved more European touring. She then joined Andrew in Australia to form their own troupe.

This year they were invited to become artistic residents of the Sydney University Theatre Workshop, and it is out of such tenure that Whistling In The Dark has evolved. Their subjects are Architecture students, plus interested ex-curricular participants, so you can't help but speculate what effect buffoonery might have on the architects of the future. These students are part of the prologue of the show, set (weather permitting) in the sculpture courtyard of the Seymour.

"The reason for using the courtyard" (they say) "is that we need a large space in which to put our installations; we change the courtyard in relationship with the show, so it's not just people performing. We use the installations to try to break down the conventions of performing in a box, to build up fantasy and enjoyment with inventiveness. "The courtyard is like a grotesque, joyous carnival. . . there is a set of oxygen cylinders made into huge chimes. There is a spider-web construction with people in Escher (the illusion-drawer)-insect costumes. There is a big face with a tongue that becomes a table where food and drink is served. We arrive with our instruments."

Will you be performing as Buffoons when you arrive?

"In disguise, yes." They show me a couple of gigantic tents. "Over our buffoon-suits, we have these huge Ubu-Alls, named after King Ubu, and also leather Satori-masks."

There are five performers in the cast proper: Steven Coupe and Sue Wallace from the Marionette Theatre, Arthur Baretta from the LeCoq school, plus Nicoletta and Andrew. Steve is a former rock guitarist turned performer in the last five years. Sue plays piano, sings and dances, which she has done since dot.

"One of the problems with this show," says Andrew, "was finding a special group of people who could integrate playing and performing; we had a criterion where we needed people who knew how to work in the Grotesque style with a capital 'G'. Which doesn't mean face-pulling (he re-arranges his own face) and going 'Nyah', but having a sense of being larger than life, being vulgar and visionary, knowing. Having a well-developed sense of comedy and also holding their own as musicians."

RED WEATHER'S musical concept was sufficiently bold to attract the services of Sarah de Jong, one of Australia's best-known theatrical composers. She has worked regularly with the Sydney Theatre Company, the Nimrod and Jim Sharman, and the One Extra Dance Company among others. Sarah has devised a number of Grotesque instruments for the Grotesque Orchestra, including a musical bed/cart on which much of the action takes place.

Nicoletta and Andrew agree that it is vital to conjoin music with theatre now, because it is making theatre contemporary.

NICOLETTA: "Music gets a much bigger audience than theatre. People don't necessarily want to sit down, watch and be passive. . . much better to be excited. We are not getting to the point (which I think will be next) where the audience can get up and dance, but this is the first show where we are taking charge of the performance and the music."

ANDREW: "One of the central themes in the show is the idea of a feast. This strange orchestra arrives in a wonderful cart with all their possessions on it. They take off a feast which they set down in front of the audience and say: 'Indulge yourself'. Throughout the show, there are a lot of food images and metaphors that occur as a 'feast of life' — and rather than be too formal and polite as we are, it would be better to get into the feast with hands and feet."

NICOLETTA: "Our main prop is the cart. It contains all we need — our instruments, a pipe organ, a portable rostrum with steps and curtain. It's also got a series of automatic mechanical instruments built underneath, so that the cart plays with itself. It goes 'boom-chicka-ding', etcetera.

"But the conventional instruments are sax, flute, mandolin, cello, violin, drums and percussion. And feet. . ."

Mechanical or real?

"Real."

Pity. . . I'd imagined a pair of huge mechanical feet padding time.

The music ranges from the joyous to the dark, and some of the scenes are pretty brutal: the Buffoons take different roles within their characters to make a point to the audience, as in a very sexual scene with one woman, two men, banana and bread. .

"It is like a dream. We are pointing out to the audience, 'That is what you are thinking that sex is'."

Hmmm. . .

"The audience, in a sense, is the real character of the show. The group of Buffoons is like a series or cluster of distorting mirrors through which the audience an see itself and ourselves: 'These are the things which happen to us.'

"We like humour because we are good at it. If you present a funny slant to something strong, it is easier to accept. It's disarming, it's charming, with a comic line. You laugh, and you see what is meant."

Red Weather works in a way which is grotesquely abstract, so the group use their bodies, the music and mime to allow them to get into situations, and out of them to something else. They made an application to the Australia Council in February this year, with a fair idea of the sort of show they wanted to do. They completed the casting in September, which left ten weeks to rehearse before three weeks' performance. Normally, the production time is six weeks, but Red Weather starts off without a text and the whole show must come from improvisation.

"For us, this is an important piece, our major work this year. . . partly because of the complete control we have and because it is an attempt to find a quite contemporary, Australian idea without falling into the normal Australian cliches. "The spirit that is nurturing the show is very Australian, though we use traditional European elements — like Commedia del'Arte masks, though not in traditional fashion."

The basic formation derives from a very French background — the LeCoq influence is strong, based on lucidity and an eye for detail, but overlaid with a certain vitality and directness which feels Australian.

ANDREW: "And if you like a fusion of things, well, I think fusion is what Australian society is all about at the moment. I don't think it would be so easy to do something flamboyant in Europe right now — Europe has a very depressing atmosphere. . . I mean, there is so much worry over the closeness to the United States."

As I leave the Seymour, I'm more worried about facing a deluge of cold rain — my umbrella is in shreds. Their two faces watch me leave, and I wonder how Nicoletta and Andrew will look when I see them next: as Buffoons, visionary satirists. Grist for the mills of Heironymous Bosch?

Massed buffoonery (Pic: Tim Grant)

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BOTH SIDES OF THE BEAT

From a breathless whisper to an anguished scream... BRONSKI BEAT push both sides of the Rage in New York City. HELEN FITZGERALD shares the pride and the agony as the Smalltown Boys ambu... in public.

THREE Smalltown Boys in the Big Apple. In town for only two weeks, yet they've already notched up some mighty adventures. Jimi's been roughed up on the subway, yesterday Larry joined in the celebrations at a circumcision, while Steve is agog with tales of jerk-off clubs and murky backroom goings on.

Larry and Steve are staying at the uptown Parker Meridien Hotel while Jimi roughs it at The Chelsea.

"I wouldnae be comfortable *here*," he sneers, curling his lip at the tastefully expensive decor in Larry's bedroom. "All this is so *false*, so contrived, what with telephones in the bog and room service to wait on you hand and foot, I mean, it's like the whole rock'n'roll myth come to life.

"From a tower block in Camberwell to *this*! I tell you man I'd rather sleep in the gutter than sleep here — not like these two jessies" — he gives Larry a none too playful dig in the ribs. "They enjoy being waited on, don't you dears?"

Life in the Bronski camp can shift in seconds from being just that to painfully intense self-analysis. In between all the laughter, the camaraderie and the gossip, Jimi drops in references to suicide attempts and the psychiatric hospital his mother sent him to when he was 15. Plunged into new environments, facing pressures that mirror the agonising confusion of their adolescence, the trio are bonded by the strengths that pulled them through before.

As Jimi says when you ask him how they're coping with all the attention, "If you can get through what we sing about, you can get through anything."

New York, with its vivid contrasts of opulence and squalor, seems to suit their ever-changing moods. Fascinated and repulsed at its hedonistic values, they've sampled the local delights with varying opinions. Jimi's still recovering from the subway attack, but it hasn't stopped him making new friends. This afternoon, he's meeting a boy to "go around the museums".

"I want to see what they put in museums here — I mean, the country's only 200 years old, yet there is a museum on every block.

"Getting punched on the subway was *awful*," he moans. "This guy came up to me and demanded my bag, an' when I wouldnae give it to him he just wallooed me! It was like something out of a film. I couldnae believe it could really happen in broad daylight. I was furious about it afterwards."

So furious that he came straight back to the studio and recorded the best, most moody vocals of the album," Steve smiles quietly. He and Larry have had a less hectic time.

After a few jaunts to the seedier gay clubs which they admit "were a bit much — even for us", they've divided their time between the studio, hotel and the Pyramid Club, where last night they went to see "this brilliant lesbian singer. She was singing really powerful songs. One of them was about the Pope, about how rich he is yet he's always condemning materialism and telling other people to combat poverty — she was great."

Some of the clubs were really weird," Larry sighs. "There's a place called the Mineshaft, they have a backroom where they're into harnesses and trusses — all that stuff. Some of the people there were too way out for words, real posers."

"And there's the jerk-off club," Steve adds, a little bewildered, "where you can *look* but not touch. We went to all the places to find out what's going on here but, in the end we decided it was pretty vacant — to coin a phrase!"

"The circumcision was a lot more entertaining," Larry grins. "*Real* vaudeville. I was invited by a friend an' it was amazing, really tacky. All these Jewish mamas videoing the event and crying and snapping polaroids of the big snip. Then afterwards they all tuck into iced cakes and sing songs and bitch about each other's hairdos.

"I felt sorry for the poor baby. After all the indignity of the scissoring, he got overlooked in the stampede for the buffet."

"Maybe we should do a song about it," Jimi quips. "We could call it *A Baby's Right To Choose!*"

'Contempt in your eyes as I turn to kiss his lips/
Broken I lie, all my feelings denied/
Blood on your fist.' — *Why?*

THE COVER says it all really; a shot of Jimi, arms wrapped agonisingly around bowed head, a picture of anguish and desperation. It's a far, far angrier single than *Smalltown Boy*, sprung taut in an aggressive beat. A step forward from the confusion and isolation of that song, *Why?* kicks back viciously at the hypocrisy and misconception that makes their sexuality so generally despised.

Written for a friend who was forced to flee the country by his young lover's parents, the song is also dedicated to the memory of Drew Griffiths — a gay playwright who was recently murdered in London.

"He was stabbed through the heart 18 times," Jimi relates sadly. "He was a great playwright, a really clever man. I met him once when I was working on a video project, and I was so angry about how his death was treated, how the police and the press handled it. It was like — 'another queer's been murdered, so what? — it's all they deserve'.

"The press really tried to sensationalise it, to dig up the dirt. I was just so disgusted by it all." He turns to stare out of the window, across Central Park and beyond.

"You in your false securities, tear up my life,
condemning me
Name me an illness, call me a sin
Never feel guilty, never give in.'

"Oh yeah, it's *angry* alright," he nods, a fragile figure fired with an urge to communicate all the pent-up hurt at once as if tomorrow might be too late. "Those are the stages I went through and still feel. After the isolation — after you're made to feel like dirt, deviant and unclean, you realise that you're not alone, and that's when the anger sets in.

"I didnae mix with any straight people for a long, long time" he quietly shrugs. "I couldnae bring myself to, I felt a kind of blanket hate. Now I suppose I've got more perspective, but it took a hell of a long time.

"I think *Why?* is going to be the decision maker for us," he muses, deftly changing the subject. "It's like — how much are people prepared to accept about what we have to say?

There have been whispers that the single may be banned — lyrically the song is very specific — but time reckons it won't happen.

"We didn't write it to get banned or anything — that's too tacky for words, but we're prepared to get banned if that's how the powers that be want to play it. I'm not gonna make compromises for a bunch of wet cissies at the BBC.

"It's not like our lyrics are smut — they're very personal. I don't see how anyone could take offence at them. I'm not sure after all the Frankie furore that they'd do that again anyway — the new tactic won't be to ban songs — they just won't play them. That way they have their own way and save face at the same time."

Mind you, the BBC aren't exactly *fond* of us," Larry giggles. "Not after our *Top Of The Pops* appearance!" Jimi turned up wearing a tee-shirt picturing "two cowboys with their cocks hanging out," and there were a lot of furrowed brows until they realised that he was going to change for the cameras.

"Then we had some problems in rehearsal — 'cos we were doin' it live," Jimi continues, "an' the producer there is like GOD — you don't talk back to him, but something went wrong and Steve started yelling at him that it was *his* problem, not ours, an' there was this deathly hush as if we'd committed some sort of heinous crime!".

So how do they get on with the "celebrities" that they have to rub shoulders with?

"Most other bands just ignore us an' hope we'll go away," Jimi laughs. "Like that George Michael — he's just a big screaming fever — he'll probably sue me now, but I dinnae care.

"An Spandau Ballet — they were sort of forcedly polite to us, but they didn't really know what to say — I mean they're so bloody *straight*. They couldnae understand our humour at all!"

They've just signed a publishing deal with Elton John's company — an event that sends them into paroxysms of laughter.

LARRY: "Elton's wonderful — but he has no idea how real people live at all. When he played Wembley Stadium, he sent a huge limousine to pick us up — can you picture it? Pulling up outside this council block in Camberwell?"

"We were *mortified*," Jimi howls. "All the local kids were staring so we *dived* out the door and into the car — I was so embarrassed, I mean imagine if anyone had *seen* us getting into this chauffeur-driven limo? But Elton's a great guy. . . when he met us he gave us all a big kiss — in front of his wife an' all!

"That gig at Wembley was crazy," he splutters. "We had our first taste of teenage hysteria there. These girls appeared from nowhere and mobbed us — I was terrified. Then one of Elton's bouncers reached out and pulled me over the barrier by the scruff of my neck — oh, the indignity of it all!

"He's flying us out to Colorado this week to have some publicity pictures taken with him — the whole private jet treatment, it's a whole different *world*."

NO-ONE has to remind the Bronskis that they've garnered phenomenal accolades on the strength (and *how*) of a spectacular debut single, but, despite playing a handful of gigs, they're still seen as very much an unproven commodity. The LP (*Age Of Consent*) will be expected to prove the width of their talent.

"Aye, we're very aware of that," Steve nods. "We're aware of the fact that having a successful single so early creates an added pressure to come up with a great album. We've tried to texture it without being too 'clever'. Simplicity means a lot to us, more than technical expertise or showing off. I wouldn't even say we're wonderful musicians, but I think we've done a pretty good job — wouldn't you say Larry?"

"Aw hell," Laz grins, springing off the bed to flick the tiny Walkman speakers on the dressing table. "Have a listen to *this*."

The voice that curves from the twin boxes has in turn been described as "unreal", "ethereal", "vibrant", "sinewy," and "electrifying" — but just witness Jimi's magnificence on *Need A Man Blues*. Transfixed by sweet smoke and his hypnotic, torchy blues, we three just sit as both meet and curl around the room.

The harmonies on *Ain't Necessarily So* raise gooseflesh, pitching from gentle to swell into the backdrop of the Pink Singers — a gay male choir recruited specially for this song and the rapturous *I Feel Love*.

"Pretty good eh?" Steve asks as the tap dancing chorus of *Heatwave* recedes into silence. He can't hide the proud glance at his partner, and there's no reason why he should.

Age Of Consent is the moodiest, sexiest, most haunting collection of songs I've ever heard. Sade can gather heart out — these guys make it look like a doppenny busker. Jimi Somerville has a natural style that relegates the competition to amateur status. One witty scribe called him the Pavarotti of the pop world, and that's not as wild as it seems.

Satiated, our little group disperses for the night. "Sweet dreams," Larry whispers as we depart to the sanctuary of our own beds. "See you in the morning."

FRIDAY. Wake up to a blue-rinsed Ronald Reagan on breakfast TV pledging his undying support for the common man. Bronski Beat rise early and saunter down to the studio where Mike Thorne's busy mixing *Feel Love* through tiny Yamaha speakers on the desk. He's proudest of that song, and admits to being "petrified" at the idea of re-working it.

"Covering *Ain't Necessarily So* was easier, but *Feel Love* was such a classic hit and so recent that I knew we had to do something special to make it a little different."

Weaving in an eerie line of *Johnny Remember Me* injects the added piquance that's the difference between a cover and a *great* cover version. There's a lot of similar stylish flourishes to the album, little extras that make a difference. A cello here, an Uptown Horns sax there — never too obtrusive to interfere, they merge to bolster the Bronski Beat soul.

"The best thing about it," Jimi murmurs, "is that people will realise that not *all* our songs are about being gay — which is a popular misconception. The other songs aren't fillers either — we're just as pleased with songs like *Junk* and *No More War* as we are with the more gay-orientated ones."

"You know, Marc Almond's my hero?" he grins, changing tack. "I just think his voice is so pure, there's so much emotion and drama in it. My fave is *Baby Doll* off the *Faking Apart* album — there's so much *anguish* in it."

But Jimi's vocals on the LP far outshine even that's purity, though he's shy about admitting it.

"Och, I am really pleased with how my voice turned out — I've been holding and sustaining notes that I've never got before. I'm a lot more confident now, I suppose that's why. I get a real kick out of it now — daring myself to see how long or how high I can get."

He laughs and glances at the other two who're giggling and ruffling each other's hair in a corner. Has he had to have any voice care, taken any lessons to help his throat take the strain?

"Not yet, but when I get home I'm gonna find a voice trainer. Not to change my voice, just to teach me how to take care of it. That's one thing that frightens me," he whispers, "the thought of losing the ability to sing.

"I'm glad you like the record," he says, shaking off the thought. "We've tried to make it as varied as possible — that's what we want to do y'know, to do things differently every time? The next single after *Why?* will be *Ain't Necessarily So* — I don't want people to form a set opinion of us in any way."

But obviously there's a special pertinence in their songs of spurned affection and confused emotion. Bronski Beat will always be campaigning to change the basic misunderstandings of the realities of being gay, that will always fire the core of their songs.

"It still amazes me how some people visualize gay life," says Jimi, shaking his head sadly. "They see it as being sex in public toilets and cruising nightclubs, and for some reason they can't see anything beyond that. But we're humans *too*. We have emotions just like you. . .

"When I was 15 my mammy sent me to a psychiatrist, to a mental hospital," he continues. "I'd tried doin' myself in, I was really fucked up. I stayed there for a week to see if they could change me — after that I walked out. I guess that was the day that changed my life, I just decided to hell with what anyone else thinks, I'm going to be and do what *I* want. My mam realised after that that I wasn't mad; she's really great now, she meets my boyfriends and she's dead proud of the band."

"You're lucky," Steve sighs. "My family don't talk about me being gay at all — but they love the fact that I'm successful."

"You think that's bad?" Larry pipes from the couch. "*Mine* didn't even *know* until they read about it in our interviews!"

BRONSKI BEAT handle the politics of the music very well; they never overstate their case, always illustrate through personal experience. Sometimes listening to their songs is painfully embarrassing as being caught reading someone else's diary. They drive their message home with a dignity that's lacking in most bands:

'You and me together, fighting for our love/Can you tell me Why?'

"If we weren't singing about personal experiences it'd probably sound very contrived," Jimi nods, "but I don't think we have to convince anyone that it's done from the heart, not for some sort of political advantage. We're not speaking 'on behalf' of any movement at all — just for ourselves.

"We've got so much to *do*," he groans when asked about their immediate plans. "We've got to make a video for the single — I don't want to say too much about it, but though the lyric is specific the video will encompass more general oppressions.

"It's set in the future," he teases, "and in the end we all get turned into pillars of salt."

Like Lot's wife fleeing Sodom and Gomorrah?

"Sort of," they grin.

"We'd like to do a small tour of the gay clubs at home — we'd intended to but then Larry got sick," Jimi enthuses. "We're not the kind of band who could do big tours, but if we could find the right places to play we could do something."

"If we play live, the songs will be structured differently," Steve interrupts. "We may use a few extras, some percussion or occasional backing vocals — we've just got so much to sort out in the next few weeks."

"I'm just looking forward to going home and taking things easy while we get the chance; the next few months are going to be *hectic*," Jimi grins.

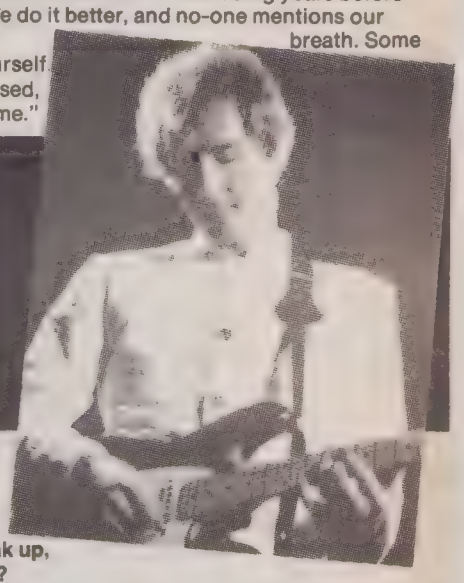
"I dinnae think things are ever going to be *normal* again."

(Pix: LFI)

LUSH, LANGUID and LOVING

ONLY A MAN who was brought up in a house of women could wring the heart so gently with the demure, chastening lyric of *Bachelor Kisses* — the Go-Betweens' most commercial single to date, and their second best. Grant McLennan — poet by nature, songwriter by profession — is one of the major Australian artists of the decade, along with Robert Forster and Nicholas Cave, and *Bachelor Kisses* is his sugar-coated stab at the heart of the charts. (He missed).

Herald the Prodigals' Return! Prior to their concurrent homecoming tours, the MOODISTS and the GO-BETWEENS hold court in London. MARIE RYAN shares conversational warmth with GRANT McLENNAN, while LYNDEN BARBER weathers a hot blast of vitriol from DAVE GRANEY and STEVE MILLER.


(Pic: Ian Greene)

The Go-Betweens write intelligent, touching, *real* songs. . . the sort of songs that hardly get played on the radio, and if they do, stand out like shaggy clumps of grass on new mown lawn, upsetting the sea of conformity with their odd shapes and drastic invention But there are two sides to the Go-Betweens, and if Robert Forster represents their private face — expressing tender love and rebellious hurt via a cutting, bitter angst — then Grant increasingly reflects their commercial aspect, clothing his familiar tales and occasional didacticism in a seductive, melodious warmth. As writer of one of the all-time great songs, *Cattle And Cane,* Grant McLennan demands respect. He knows he is good, occasionally glorying in a degree of arrogance and self-belief which might be offputting were it not so totally justified. He is also a thoroughly charming man who loves to litter the conversation with extreme, bizarre or just plain funny pronouncements, delivered via deadpan countenance, and which interviewers are wont to seriously quote in their articles. And despite his modern views on women, there is an element of Grant that springs from the old school of gentleman — a relic of his private boarding school days perhaps.

When I recently caught up with Grant to chat about the latest Go-Betweens' album (*Spring Hill Fair*) and other matters, he had just moved into an appropriately tiny garret room in South London which barely held a miniature single bed and his books. All that was on display were three shelves of poetry volumes. The remainder of his hefty collection of literature was clustered in boxes under the bed. A copy of the new Rickie Lee Jones album, *The Magazine,* sat on the mantelpiece, while a bottle of Southern Comfort (courtesy of myself) sat on the floor.

What do you think of *Spring Hill Fair* in relation to your past work? Do you rate it more highly?

"Yes, I do. I rate it a lot better than the previous two albums. I do have some doubts about some of the things on it, but nothing to do with the songs. I think it's the best collection of songs that we've written so far. I think it's a brilliant album, I really do. I'm incredibly honest, so when I say it's brilliant it *is* brilliant."

Spring Hill is a place in Queensland, isn't it?

"Yeah, it's this inner-city place in Brisbane, sort of like Darlinghurst in a way. It's just a few rolling hills and some very old timber houses, lots of palm trees and it's really relaxing. A lot of 'groovy' people have moved in there now, you know, people who are in the brass door handle business, but when we were there it was just junkies, that sort of thing.

"The reason we called it *Spring Hill Fair* is because every September or October in Brisbane, there is a fair called the Spring Hill Fair — it's just a glorified fete, and one of the streets is blocked off and they have all these stalls. And it's great, because winter is over and it's getting really hot; though I never had much fun at Spring Hill Fair, I must admit. We thought it would be the first time we mentioned Brisbane without being insulting. Everybody from Brisbane I know insults it, and with good reason. It's a contemptuous town."

There's one track on *Spring Hill Fair* that's quite different from the other songs — *River Of Money.* It has some of the aura of that Wenders film, *Paris, Texas.* It has that same sense of desolation, and someone waiting.

"Yeah, it's a strange song. When I first wrote it, it was a far more traditionally based song with verses and choruses and melody all the way through, but when I took it to the band, it just wasn't there — you know when a song isn't there — and it wasn't what I wanted. I think I suggested that it should be slower and bluesy.

"Anyway, Robert Vickers" (bass) "had this loping rhythm and Lindy just banged away behind it, and I threw out all the lyrics that I had except for the chorus — *'I'll take you to Hollywood'* — and just put over the top this prose that I was writing at the time. And as soon as I spoke the first lines — *'it is neither fair nor reasonable to expect sadness'* — I just knew that that was the song. It was just great, and I think it's one of the best things I've ever done. I'm very proud of it."

Another way that it's similar to *Paris, Texas* is that although the man has lost a woman, you don't actually talk about his feelings. There's a sense of loss, but it's almost as if he's numb.

"Well, you see, what I wanted to do was make it almost documentary — sometimes when I do it live, I just avoid any sort of emotion whatsoever, and some people think that's quite a good way to do it and others don't. I don't think the person's numb, it's just that I didn't want to editorialise it, and the only thing I wanted which jumped out was the chorus — because that, in some ways, doesn't fit the song. But it's important to have those lines, all those promises."

***Bachelor Kisses* is a very romantic sounding song in the way that you sing it. I read your *NME* interview, and I was very interested to see what it was about. I'd listened to it lots of times and couldn't quite work out the perspective of the person singing it. Would you describe yourself as a romantic? In both senses of the word, big 'R' and small 'r'.**

"Uh. . . I don't know. I like a lot of big 'R' Romantic writing. I think I'm an idealist."

Are you romantic about love?

"No, I'm quite cowardly about it, actually. *Bachelor Kisses. . .* something that's always affected me and is probably the main thing I hate in the world to see is people get hurt, for whatever reasons, through ideology or bad love or bad luck. No, I just saw a lot of women that I know, or even women I didn't know, in bad relationships. I mean sexism just didn't come into it, it was just abuse by men.

"And with *Bachelor Kisses* I wanted to say a warning, that while someone can say to you 'I love you and I want you to wait for me the rest of your life,' you should also be very wary about it, because the reverse of that is you can be a slave to the kisses as well. Not that I'm in any Olympian position to hand out advice or anything, it's just be careful of men. I mean, things have changed, but basically I still think most men are bastards."

You sing that song with so much feeling — I can understand why people interpret it wrongly.

"Yes, well it's phrased, written and performed in that manner. It's the perverse Go-Betweens thing, you know. I like things to have a variety of meanings."

So you're not upset if someone misinterprets that song?

"No, no, no. I'm not upset if people misinterpret for a start what I think the song is about. It often doesn't correspond to what people think it's about anyway, and who's to say who is right or wrong just because I've written it? Do I have more say about what it's about? A song is a public domain, especially if we're making records and it's out and people listen to it. It's no longer mine. I might happen to have my name on it but it's not my song anymore. Whatever people get out of it, I don't mind.

"I do object to it if people get it so wrong it's negative. I don't write negative songs. Some of them might be melancholy or depressing, but I do not write negative songs."

You seem to have strong feelings about your family and relatives that come out in your songs. Like *Dusty In Here* for instance. (On *Before Hollywood.*)

"Yeah. . . I love history, and families just endorse history. That song was the first time I'd ever come to grips — in any writing I'd done — with my father's death. When I wrote that song, it was 20 years ago that he'd died. It's unfortunate that I'm not a Christian, and I'm like the most belligerent atheist there is."

You're an atheist? You're not an agnostic then?

"No, no. Agnosticism is the refuge of the puerile. You make a decision, you either believe or you don't, and if you don't believe, then there's no God. But in some ways it seems so unjust if there isn't an afterlife. Take, for example, people who live really tragic lives — that's it, they're dead and there's nothing more. Faced with the idea of the hereafter, you feel that at least it balances out because they eventually find happiness. It's a very appealing idea.

"I know what you mean, and it *is* very appealing. But that sort of viewpoint is endorsed by governments, whether they be right wing or left wing, and it's just some carrot they hand out so that you get the people working for the state. You know, if they lead a good life, they get a reward. I mean, that's bullshit."

That particularly applies in some Third World countries where they're taught to put up with their lot in this world and maybe in the next they'll get their reward or be reincarnated as something higher up the scale.

"It particularly applies in England. They have an ethic of reward here. The government owes you nothing. I loathe governments, and I loathe organised religion. They're two things I hate most in this world. . . apart from Spandau Ballet.

"I did a couple of interviews for Australia recently and they asked me about *Five Words.* I just think that that's about the most direct lyric I've ever written, apart from maybe *Bachelor Kisses."* (Grant picks up his guitar and plays *Five Words*). *'Birthstone, tombstone'* — there's death again. . *'all stone, bury them, don't keep them'* — that's the most blatant, almost protest song I've ever written. Kick the fucking clergy out of their jobs and get on with the real world.

"The sad thing about it is my uncle is a Church of England minister, and while I really respect his intelligence I just don't think he should have that job. I know it provides a service and people really appreciate it, but so do brothels. I think it's ultimately detrimental to a human being's spiritual development by limiting it to 'well, we're here, but there is eternal life.' That to me just limits the whole potential of our existence. I just hate that sort of belief. I just *hate* it."

AT THIS point we take a break to watch *Top Of The Pops.* Grant warns me that he will be irritable when we resume the interview but he feels impelled to watch it anyway. As we expect, it is truly abysmal. Afterwards. . .

"Oh fuck. *Top Of The Pops,* I can't believe it! You know that's the sort of thing we're getting pushed into."

Who by?

"By Warners'. All the major labels are interested in is mathematics. It's just how much they spend and how much they get back. Not one person we've met so far is interested in a quality act, in music that lasts, and it completely disillusions me every time I go in. I just feel like shit in those offices, because all they've got up on their walls is, you know, the week's chart placings. They've only got WEA acts up there, and we're not up there. And we're the best fucking band they've got on the label."

How long can the Go-Betweens keep going in these circumstances?

"Well, I personally don't think that long. I've just been thinking of late, whilst I love the art that I'm in and I think Robert and I write very good songs. . . and that's another thing that I'm really upset about! They mention all the new princes about town, like Lloyd Cole and all those new Scottish bands — the sort of stuff that Robert and I were doing years before them. I still think we do it better, and no-one mentions our songs in the same breath. Some people do, like yourself. But I'm not depressed, it just disappoints me."

If the band did break up, what would you do?

"I haven't really thought about it; I don't think I would stay in music. I'd write, that's the thing I've always done, but I don't think I'd keep in music because Robert and I made one of those adolescent vows that you make when we first started the band. I said to Robert one time, 'This is the only band I ever want to be in,' and he said the same thing. I don't know if he still feels the same way, but it's pretty much how I feel. The Go-Betweens is a one-off, for me but also for the world."

You and Robert are obviously very close. How long have you known each other?

"Since the end of 1976. I met him at University. Like all very close friendships, our friendship was quite homosexual in a way. I don't mean in any physical sense. . . I'll have to explain that. Homosexuality is not exclusively physical. The homosexuals I know, a lot of the relationships aren't based on sex; that comes into it, but it's just who you feel closest to in the world — and most homosexuals feel closest to men.

"We were in Queensland, which is a very macho state, and Brisbane is the capital of that and symbolises everything which is disgusting about Queensland. Practically every other person involved in music that we met was not interested in the things we were. They were all interested in a tougher sort of music, so Robert and I were very much pushed together. We were pushed together at University in our foppish attitudes towards theatre as well. We were far more interested in Clint Eastwood than William Shakespeare, so that caused a few problems in our course."

Why do the Go-Betweens want to leave London and not come back?

"Basically because London is a shithole. I used to try and be really academic and very nice about it, but I just find that the words that come to mind are derogatory and incredibly dirty. I just feel no compulsion to be polite about it anymore."

Do you think you could live back in Australia again?

"Um, probably, but we'd get bored pretty quickly. I think we'd just have such a comfortable life there. I hear the Australian live scene's pretty dead at the moment, there's no new bands and a lot of clubs have closed down. I'd like to live in Australia if I wasn't involved in music. I'd like to be involved in film or writing."

Have you ever thought about acting?

"Yes, I did at University, but I didn't really fit in — maybe because I was working in a theatrical tradition there. I would like to do some cinema acting, but I think there are very few roles for me. Actually, I would have liked to have been in *Return To Eden,* I would have liked to do the James Reyne part. A really abysmal series, but I would have liked to have had the role of the ex-tennis player."

I didn't see it. What was he like?

"Oh, he was terrible! A terrible actor!!" (*Adopts fiercely nasal twang*)" 'Oh darling, Oh *darling*'. . . like that. He was terrible. I hate Bryan Brown's acting as well. I really dislike non-emotional acting. Only one person does it well and that's Clint Eastwood, and that's because he has a morality which comes out. Bryan Brown just sits there with that face and that ski nose." (*Adopting an even fiercer nasal twang*) "'Yeah, well love, are we going down to Cairns?'"

ONE minute and several giggles later, the interviewer picks herself up off the floor and straightens her face. Yes, well Grant, one final question. *What's your favourite Go-Betweens' song?*

"Well, I think *Part Company* is the best song that Robert's ever written (true!) apart from *Karen.* I think *Part Company* is a classic, and I've told him many times I think it's an absolutely brilliant song. My songs. . . I can't go past *Cattle And Cane,* because it's so close to me. I actually wrote that song on Nick Cave's guitar. I wrote it over at his place one night in 1982 when he was living in Paddington (London). *Unkind And Unwise* is Part II of *Cattle And Cane.* I'm trying to write a third song on the same theme. It's a trilogy."

MARIE RYAN

SHORT, SHARP and SAVAGE

LISTEN: I once interviewed a deaf man, scribbled words on a pad and handed pen and paper over for a response. But never have I had to orchestrate a conversation from hombres as mean and moody and quiet and cool and exasperatingly uncommunicative and flat out reticent as this tough pair of outlaws from Melbourne. Ladies and gentlemen, presenting:

What had you been doing before The Moodists?

"Not much really."

You must have been doing *something.*

"On the dole."

"Basically not doing much. I was interested in music. I spent a couple of years trying to play guitar."

Who were the people you were listening to around then?

"Anybody and everybody."

"Anybody from Johnny Thunders to Big Joe Turner."

Why do you think rock music seems to be more fashionable in Australia?

"I don't know."

WELL, I did get more out of them than that, and yes I did cheat and jam all the shortest replies together for effect ("journalistic licence" it's called, though some would prefer "lying"). But one thing is certain: Dave Graney, singer, and Steve Miller, guitarist, do not like talking to reporters one little bit.

What remains unspoken could account for how the Moodists' music is so intense, their walls of sound so mighty. It's almost as if they are holding back their energy until they can strap on guitars, sit behind the kit, grasp the microphone and really and truly LET RIP.

Graney and Miller can't understand the attitude of people — particularly the press — in this country, and they are rightly dismissive of the bigots who stalk this land scowling at the sight of electric guitars.

"One of the main differences between here and home is that here you come into contact with more journalists, who just seem to swap references among themselves in all the music papers with all these meaningless little catch phrases. like "rock" in sort of quotation marks; it's been agreed on that that's an embarrassing word to say."

Australians imagine their own bands going to London to live in cheap, freezing cold flats in squalid tenement blocks in places like Maida Vale. We are sitting in a cheap, squalid flat in Maida Vale, and I'm shivering.

When I comment on the rather pitiful way in which sections of the press announced, with a great toot of trumpets, a big swing back to "guitar bands" as soon as Big Country and U2 had achieved some level of popularity and the Alarm had scored one single in the Top 30, Graney lets loose a sneer that could shatter concrete.

"All these groups are so *shitty.* They might have colourful guitars or something, so at least it's something to write about. 'Cos all their songs are shithouse and they're all ugly. So they might as well write about their guitars."

SOME brief history. Graney and Miller knew each other in a small country town, escaped to Adelaide where they formed a band with drummer Clare Moore, but decided to give it a miss because "we were inept" — thus landing in Melbourne, where they formed the Moodists in 1980.

Their debut album, *Engine Shudder,* was recorded and released here on licence by Red Flame, an immature stage of what was to become the Moodists' swathe of rage — full of buckets of scratchy guitar and Fall-like spikiness; it got pretty monotonous after a couple of tracks, and Graney's (then underdeveloped) voice didn't sound nearly nasty enough for the darkened torrents beneath.

The second album, recorded in England, fixes all those problems once and for all. For a start, Miller's been joined by a second guitarist, Mick Turner — a team whose ferocious guitar sound is enough to blast the cement from between bricks. Graney's voice is primed to destroy all monsters, and Clare Moore hammers her kit like a woman truly deranged.

Thirsty's Calling establishes the group as a moody bunch.

As for pretentious old moi, I reckon it's the most unashamedly boulder-smashing and ear bashing LP this side of Glenn Branca and that side of Birthday Party.

Yes, I *did* say Birthday Party, those recently departed fellow Melbournites — a group who have obviously had an influence on *les Moodistes.* Don't you agree, Dave?

"I don't know, I don't think so."

"I think there *are* similarities. . .

"I wouldn't say that. The similarity is that we both come from Australia."

This sort of stuff is almost obligatory — it's what's known as over-defensiveness. Groups who openly admit their major influences are as rare as badgers on bicycles.

But Graney is suspicious of comparisons between his band and the Birthdays for other reasons too:

"You know, how people lionised the Birthday party and transformed them into some cultural fucking demolition squad or something. They just got painted into such a horrible corner that they could light their farts and it would be taken as some sort of great poetical statement of the Twentieth Century, do you know what I mean?"

He fixes me with a sneer that translates as *"You scum."*

"You read things like *The Sun* or *The Star* and you begin to think that if the views propagated are held by anybody in England, it's a pretty sick place," says Graney, hitting things pretty squarely on the head. "With things like that I think Australia seems like the Wild West. . . California here I come.

"The music scene reflects that sort of conservatism, it's so mindless and gutless, and that goes from the bands in the Top 10 to your underground mystic priests. They're so pathetic."

ONE thing I like about the Australian bands who've come to this country is that they've all — without exception — been able to see through the layers of crap that so many people here seem to get sucked in by. These words were difficult to coax out of Graney, but maybe hostility to the press ain't such a bad thing if the press proves itself to be frequently irresponsible and plain dumb.

If this kind of negativity is reflected in music as positive as *Thirsty's Calling,* then give me the tough talkers any day.

Perhaps it wasn't such a rough interview after all. . .

LYNDEN BARBER

Labour of Love

(Pix: LFI)

"Well serious, well heavy, and very British" they may well be, but UB40's Robin and Ali Campbell aren't lacking in wit, wisdom and social concern either. BRIAN CASE meets them on their Home Turf.

THERE'S an old anarchist film called *Themroc* which would appeal to the Campbell brothers of UB40. One day, the hero decides he's sick of working in a factory, goes home, bricks up the door, and stays in except for nocturnal forays from the window to get a fresh gendarme to eat.

Here at their Birmingham headquarters, DEP International, I am trying to track two independent conversations as we descend the spiral staircase to The Abattoir, the group's own recording studios. Ali, to the rear, is explaining the quirks of the building — a one-time bacon factory that they bought for a bargain 30 grand — while Robin, leading the way, anatomizes the police force.

"I swear I've heard little squeals on this staircase," says Ali. "The spirits of departed pigs — they used to drag them in here and turn them into bacon."

"Oh, a pig's life is a happy one," says Robin. "They're on the cushiest number they've ever had — they can kick the shit out of people for free, they're on good money with lots of overtime plus all the drugs they can handle, drink free, eat free, clothes free. . ."

"There was pigs' blood all over the place. The walls were literally covered with blood. It smelled like an abattoir. The Rastas wouldn't come anywhere near it."

". . . and generally be nasty in the area. I can't believe it when they come up to us and say they like our records. They can't be listening! You know, most squaddies in the Army are in and they can't get out —it's too late, they've signed on. Pigs can get out any time, but they don't want to."

I'm finding it hard to come up with a comment that will straddle both conversations, when we happen upon a dishevelled hippie in the cellar.

"Hi, Animal," says Ali.

"Hi, Animal," I courteously conform.

"Hi, Animal," says Robin.

"That's Animal. He scrubbed all the pigs' blood off these walls. This used to be an abattoir, see?"

"Uh-huh."

THEIR feeling for Birmingham is bred in the bone, along with their 2-tone naturalness and anti-authoritarianism.

The city's radical tradition has changed. Unlike London or Manchester in the last century, Birmingham was not divided by class antagonism. A city of small workshops where men had the chance of becoming their own masters, it fielded earnest gradualists who believed in order, reason, and Quaker principles. All that changed when the big companies moved in — cars, chemicals, plastics — and the waves of immigration offered capital the chance of divide and rule. Thatcher did the rest: UB40.

The Campbell brothers come from the good old protest tradition of CND and folk song. Their father, Alex Campbell — an engraver turned folk singer — used to carry them on his shoulders on the Aldermaston Marches. (*'It's a long way to Aldermaston/It's a long way to go!'*). These were the earnest, reasonable, gentle people who were clubbed bloody by the Metropolitan Police in Trafalgar Square in 1961, a reprisal which turned a sit-down into the foetal position of fear. Perhaps the Campbells won't remember that too clearly, but they have absorbed the lesson.

"I think the adoption of reggae was partly a rebellion against my father's traditional folk scene," admits Robin. "The sitting around in big jumpers, sandals, swilling beer. That wasn't really our scene. We lived in a black area which was predominantly West Indian and Asian. Very few whites. Reggae is MY music as well. Reggae was THERE, crying out! My father hated it! Absolutely.

"I tried for years to get my old man to listen to some reggae — principally Bob Marley because he was the most accessible. Basically, he couldn't understand a word that was being said, and when you showed him the lyrics, they were written in patois. We used to have screaming matches!"

UB40 are in the spotlight of success, and subjected to a more subversive rush of media exposure and crumpet than the old folk radicals. They defend themselves pretty well, putting up their wittiest flak-catchers for interview, and trusting no-one with a press-card in the hatband.

This is wise. When the riots hit in 1981, most newspapers swung with the millionaire publishers. The pop press, very exercised by street credibility and like that, mainly shivered on the top board. UB40 put their money where their mouth was. We get into this a little. Understandably, the Campbells move into the flippant register. . .

"The *Daily Mail* splattered it across the front page," says Robin. "'UB40 PAY THE FINES OF LOOTERS!!!!' We did the Toxteth benefits to pay the fines of people arrested in the riots. We helped to fund the defence committees. We got banned. The ban was supposed to last for life, but. . ."

"*Nationwide* phoned us to go on the box and talk to them about it, but we didn't. Not worth it. They've got the power of editing. Newspapers the same. You see what you said come out totally the opposite. We banned all press once for about 12 months because we were pissed off."

WE shift onto UB40's American tours. So far, they've done tours of Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Zimbabwe and Europe. Why, I ask, have the Americans been so slow to take up reggae? Is it because of a persistent and unjustified prejudice among American blacks that West Indians are just off the boat — even though Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X and countless other black activists in America have been West Indian?

"It's happening now — slowly," says Ali. "American blacks have had a lotta stick through the ages. If you wanted to get anywhere in America you had to iron your hair out, clip your nose, thin your lips. Reggae is the opposite. And it's all sewn up with black radio stations and white radio stations — and black stations don't like ethnic music."

"That's why Michael Jackson is so big," says Robin. "Because he's the whitest black I've ever seen. He's had his face restructured, hasn't he?"

"We've sold half-a-million albums there, so that's worth going there for," says Ali.

"But it's difficult because they're so fucking thick. I find it a bit oppressive. Especially New York — frightening. Too fast!"

"Yeah. It's fun for a few days. At first it's skyscrapers. You see more victims the second or third time round."

"The politics of the young people there are depressing. Some of the discussions we've had with so-called liberals who suddenly go on the defensive when you start slagging off Reagan — they're so *patriotic!* It's the conditioning, getting up every morning and pledging allegiance to the flag."

Ali snorts. "I had a little American flag and I took it out of my pocket to wipe off some sweat — and our Vietnam veteran roadie fucking freaked OUT! Can't wipe your face with the flag! At least I didn't wipe my arse on it."

Both Campbells are sick of the fact that no-one ever gets beyond politics with the band to talk about music. So later I settle with UB40's saxophonist, Brian Travers — plus a few pints of plain — and do just that. Dolphy crops up in the first minute, then Sonny Rollins and Art Pepper. Brian has a huge painting of Coltrane on his wall at home. He was into jazz long before it became trendy, he confides.

It isn't that he dislikes Carmel and Sade and the current copyists — kids have to start somewhere, after all — but he wishes they didn't dress up period to play. We get on.

He devised and produced the *Labour Of Love* video, directed the promo for the new album and won his director's ticket. All this, he insists, was to protect the do-for-self policy of DEP.

He'd rather play saxophone. He tells me a real saxophonist's story about a class in Birmingham where the teacher got the kids to feel a piece of velvet against the cheek, then try for the sound to go with it on the horn.

Next spring, with luck, the Campbell brothers will star in a feature film — hopefully with a script by Brian Travers and cameos for the band, besides the score.

"Well serious, well heavy, very British," says Robin. "It's on the cards, but it's all too early to talk about it yet."

My guess is that if it happens, All — judging by his charismatic performance in *Labour Of Love* — could find himself a star. Or banned again.

THAT BIG BOSS GROOVE

'And ain't it a shame how the music lost again?
The power of the promise we made got blown out in the din
Sentimental thoughts from a hard rock kid
Trying to perceive the damage done
Well I got two hands and the courage of a man
Who wants to carve his name in the sun?'
***— Steppin' Out,* by The Dictators**

CRAIG CSONGRADY, lead singer of Sydney band Boss, is a hard rock kid. And while Handsome Dick Manitoba and his Dictatorial crew didn't pen the above-quoted ditty especially for him, the song fits this Australian son of Hungary as tightly as his beloved spandex jeans and be-holed denim jackets.

The music of Boss is as dominating as their name. For while a night with the Psychotic Turnbuckles demands Ramones T-shirts and dancing the pony and Decline of The Reptiles require cut-off army shirts and swigs of Jim Beam, Boss are best appreciated through the media of cold VB's, a heavy halo of sweat and close contact between cranium and stage. . . headbanging, for the uninitiated. To the tune of high decibel, thumping good rock and roll.

As the ad used to read, "I used to think Fucking was a town in China until I discovered vodka". I used to think the Ramones held the record for smearing their audience's cerebellums. . . until I encountered Boss. 'Cos Boss have two types of fans — the ones who stand up the back near the bar and sway their heads from side to side, and the ones who stand in front of the stage, flinging their heads backwards and forwards and beating their neck muscles and brain cells into a satisfying mush.

Your average, sophisticated rock fan, who's au fait with everyone from the Shy Imposters to Sade, is left stunned — as much by the behaviour of Boss fan-atics as by the band's lyrical and musical affront. Hell, it took my neck a whole week to recover from one night spent with the headbanging fraternity at a Motorhead gig, but the Boss kids spend night after night, week after week, kissing the stage with their foreheads! A lot of chiropractors — and neurosurgeons — must be eternally grateful to this band.

SOMETIME around the turn of this decade, Csongrady joined up with guitarists Kevin Pratt and Peter Sutcliffe to form a band guaranteed to put fear into the hair gel set and loathing into the minds of most influential radio programmers. They spent the next year tuning up through the routes of satellite city pubs/suburban beer barns, and through gaining supports for bands like Cold Chisel, Rose Tattoo, the Angels and the Divinyls, Boss infiltrated the urban heart.

However, hand-to-mouth ruled their survival game while counterparts like Heaven and the Tatts were handing over Qantas boarding passes for a chance to crack the American and European markets. This situation become noticeable enough for rockzines large and small to take a swipe at Boss, who were rapidly becoming written off as no-hopers.

So what happened? According to Craig, the band languished through their own inexperience and naivete, coupled with a manager "who thought we were the next Beatles when we could only have been classed as shithouse at that point". Still, demo tapes were recorded and duly despatched overseas, where those aware of the heavy rock market sniffed enthusiastically and talked of worldwide releases. A *Sounds* review appeared, urging English fans to put their money on Boss rather than the Tatts as the best heavy rock band to come out of Oz. But suddenly. . . nothing.

The record companies who'd been smelling a winner disappeared after being presented with an over-inflated contract price and a manager who was unprepared to negotiate. And Boss remained "a legend in our own underpants", watching the resurrection of heavy rock in America and Europe from the other side of the planet.

Proving their belief in the saying that good things come to those who wait — alongside proof of the kind of loyalty that these suburban boys inspire in their fans — Boss began to pull themselves out of the quagmire last year. First came a change in their rhythm section, with drummer Alan Bryant coming in from Adelaide and local bassist Scott Ginn filling out their already solid sound. After which came months spent in three separate studios with five engineers and the band's own production team, working on the just-released *Step On It* album — sold to RCA as a finished product.

Overseas interest in the band has resurfaced, with RCA's American offices leading the push. Useful, when the bulk of local record companies still regard their heavy rock acts — even such proven money earners as Iron Maiden or AC/DC — as a bit of a joke.

But, having lost their musical innocence after that first glittering prize dissolved into fool's gold, Boss are harbouring no illusions about where they stand.

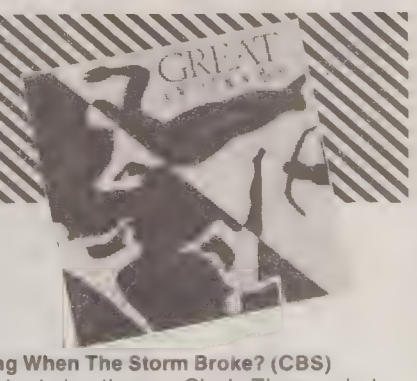
Up against the sort of prejudice that dismisses all local heavy rock bands as inferior to the imported product, it's clear they'll either have to fly or die — a prospect they have resigned themselves to right from the beginning.

It's just a shame that the recorded Boss doesn't hold a candle to the live band. *Step On it,* albeit containing a judicious blend of their stage headbangers as well as their heartachers, comes across as thin and lifeless compared to any of the shows I've caught. But the strength of the Csongrady/Pratt/Sutcliffe songwriting team shines through such numbers as *That Woman, Strange Games, Cry Cry* and *Shake It,* showing they have the ability to overcome the major weakness of most heavy rock bands. . . err, in da woids department, ya know?

Swill and sweat rock leaves me cold for the most part, but as for Boss: well, these kids are alright.

J.J. ADAMS

The Displaced Persons' SINGLES DIGEST



Gainfully Unemployed Demo Show hosts and known culinary masochists THE NORM and TV BROWNE attempt to swallow a large order of recent seven-inchers. Don't watch the bile rise. . .

SO WE LOADED UP on Bratwurst, tomatoes, a lightly fried egg and a sprinkling of shallots, just to give us something colourful to barf up during this review. Well, you have to keep your interest up somehow — what with the world of music being what it is these days — and anyway... (get on with it — Ed.) *OK! OK! We'd just like to add that the best review is your own ears. Let's get down then.*
(The Norm's comments up first.
T.V.'s second, in italics).

THE ALLNITERS
I Saw You First (Powderworks)
This Tony Cohen/Richard Lush-produced piece gets off to a promising start (quietly boppable stuff of the bed-sit atmospherics genre, a bit of a sway) and then blows it n the *'Ob lah di Ob la dah'* (Beatles)-style chorus. If you see it first, duck.
Safe Allniters with a little ditty that feels as though it's heading for the dole. Great breakfast. Are they all going to be this good?

RUSS BALLARD
Voices (EMI)
Ex-Argent axe grinder Ballard has a stab at resurrecting the old career here with a stompable funkout. Sort of Robert Palmer-ish, which is where a lot of the seventies British pub-rocker/ex-hippy tribe find themselves these days. It seems Russ hears voices. Who am I to call him a liar? Still, he *can* play guitar.
Russ is in trouble, again, with his other being that lurks within. He reckons he's got the key, but those voices are trying to tear this celestial entity off the straight and narrow. Look straight ahead, don't watch Phil Collins. 'Don't look back, yesterday's gone', *he wails. So are you Russ.*

THE ALARM
Where Were You Hiding When The Storm Broke? (CBS)
These boys have been touted as the new Clash. They remind me more of a British version of Springsteen on magic mushrooms, backed by a bunch of Druids on valium at a soccer match on a wet English afternoon. But then I've been told I exaggerate a *fuck* of a lot. No Strummers at work here, just media hype, I fear.
And indeed, where were you? Me and Guido were trying to get the drains cleared... 'Get back in your shelter' *... the storm is brewing heavily on this vinyl bash.*

JOHN KENNEDY
The End Of The Affair (Waterfront)
No, not *the* John Kennedy, *a* John Kennedy. Sixties Latin groove, heavy on the reverb tambourine and Spanish guitar. Is this a joke or what? John should include a request for a voice in his prayers. Cute sax break. I feel the first of the bratwurst begin to struggle up my oesophagus. How many more dumb-shit love songs like this can the human race stand? For God's sake, get into the streets! Demonstrate! Is this record still on?
I thought that the silver linings may have been in sight through the holocaust... every body needs one (a silver lining), everybody, it seems, except John. The breakfast in my gut begins to quiver. Elvis may not turn in his grave, but he's busy decomposing around here somewhere. Chin up, John.

THE TRIBE
Dreams (CBS)
Doosh wak doosh wak... now, where have I heard that before? Oh year, *everywhere*. Just some bloody band trying to sound like the bloody Divinyls and not making it. Bloody oath.
L.A. may not be too far away for this lot, the lack of creative flair is definitely there. If their manager's a coke dealer, they'll probably make it.

ROBERTS FROST
Just Remember (Big Time)
Why do boring wankers like this think they can write songs? As a single, it would make a great frisbee. First bratwurst blesses the carpet.
I'd rather forget, thanx.

XTC
All You Pretty Girls (Virgin)
A nursery-rhyme folk groove from these English folk-translators. Why do they not sit on the right hand of God? XTC are one of the most consistently impressive bands on the planet, nervous breakdowns notwithstanding. This is more stuff for Morris dancing, disco bopping, chant freaks world-wide. A sense of history moving forward in every bar, beat and humming harmony. But it will probably be missed. The good always die young.
The spark seems to have dimmed a little with this industrial hum. It does, however, act as a calmative in the stomach, which is something.

UB40
If It Happens Again (Virgin)
What do you say about a band who come from one of the most under-privileged corners of western civilisation (Birmingham, England), who take themselves round the world a few times, have their own label and recording studio, and whose average age is still in the low twenties? Pulse on, is what I say. A further refinement of the unmistakable UB40 sound, born in ganja smoke amid the industrial wastes of Britain. Ali Campbell tells us that if someone doesn't do something, he's leaving. Give him and his mates a visa and tell them they're welcome here.
GET DOWN! This groove sends little jolts of enthusiasm through the corridors of sensibility. This band get smoother and creamier, all the right flavours blending... can I have another one of those health shakes with honey, nuts, seeds, Afghani black and cointreau, please?

GREAT OUTDOORS
The Rhythm In Me Is Working In 3D (Survival)
The rhythm's just not in Gunther, who tells us he's walking fast *and* in three dimensions, but... not fast enough, Gunt ol' mate, and I would have said definitely mono-dimensional. These people want to be pop stars. Not with my buck, they don't. The sound of current fashion.
I thought that foreign sausage had settled. Light and bouncy with a hushed sense of commercial viability... er... or something.

THE GO-BETWEENS
Bachelor Kisses (Sire)
A summer hit. Melody and (in-tune) harmonies a la Burt Bacharach (whom I believe it's cool to like, again) put this toon squarely on the world's charts. Not hugely huge, just quietly successful. The sort of thing you'd find yourself humming as you starch your prom-frock and wonder if Cliff Richard ever has trouble with acne. A good start in the big league. Stay tuned.

SCRIBBLE
Adaptability (Regular)
Lester Piggot is an English jockey and no relation to Johanna Piggott, alias Scribble, but I suspect one of Lester's mounts could be more musically original than this. Sounds to sit out a traffic jam with, right in the middle of the road. Tomatoes and egg now getting restless.

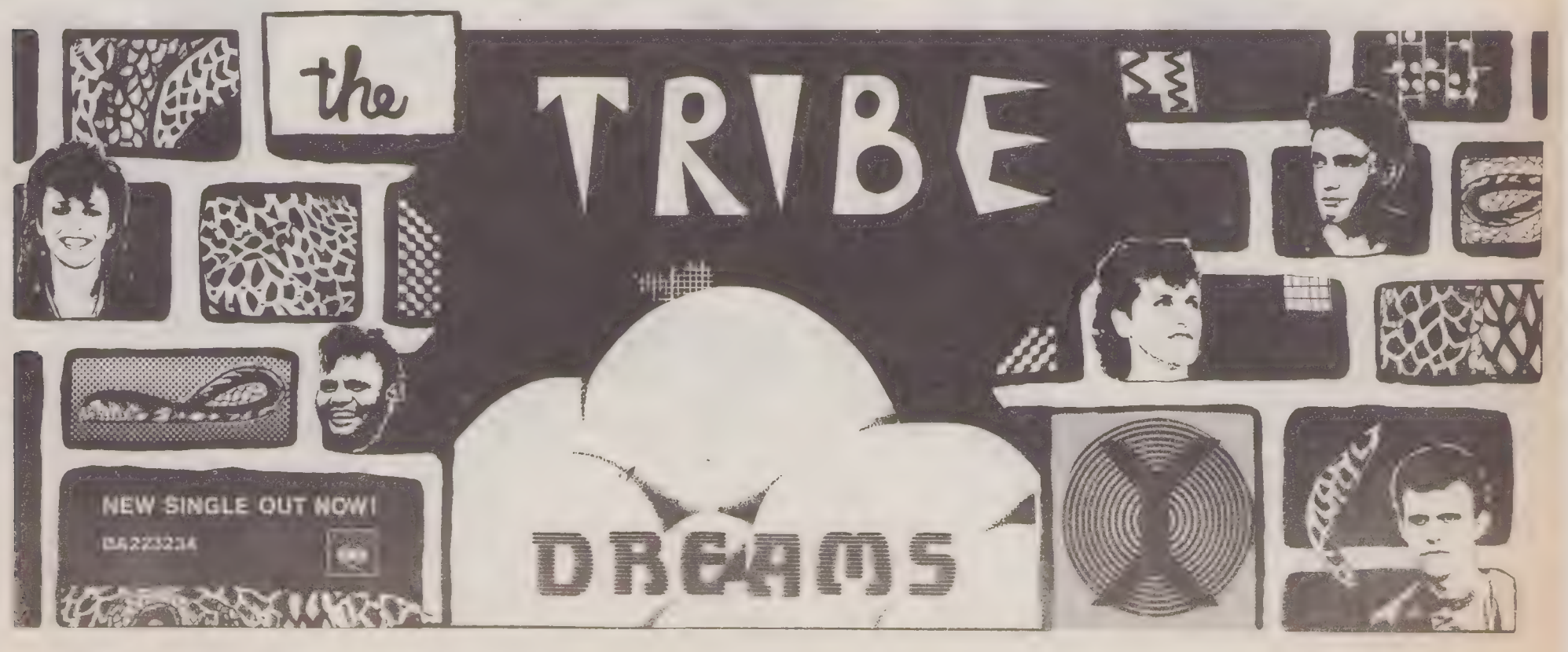
SCRAP MUSEUM
Say Die (Rampant)
Meanwhile back in the swamp, something stirred. Scrap Museum grease their limbs in goose fat and do the snake ritual. *Say Die* is Johnny Cash on acid, but, unlike earlier singles reviewed (Great Outdoors excepted), *lots* of info on the band comes with the vinyl. Must indies *always* point the way? Ten out of ten to Rampant and responsible parties for the packaging, and I'll give the record another spin just as soon as I can find the Seconal and a bottle of McWilliams' port.
Dirgy and dark with those chunks of cutting guitar that flash like startled eyes from the potato sack... a happy day it was, the sun shining within a glimmering azure backdrop, birds piping among the branches of the old silver gum, Ned (the wild roo that eats Weetbix right out the cupboard) swotting flies from his astrally conceived spot on the front verandah... and then there's Say Die.

THE MINDSWEEPERS
Egypt And France (Self-release)
What does it all mean? Could it be we've all been here before? A lot of moody buggers, but if dislocation dancing is your bag, then this could be the one to take with you next time you go isolation tanking. Jest far out, man.
Jam sandwiched in there with the Oz bass sound is a spread of lard that smothers any highlight. Have you noticed all the food references in this review?

3 MUSKETEERS
The Drop (Ginsling)
Stone jazz groove, mon, the human voice as instrument, dry and only occasionally affected. Hey, pass me that reefer, here come the Beatniks. I bet these people wear berets. Love to catch 'em live. Take me back to the coffee lounge, Alice. Self-produced magic. Alexander Dumas would be proud.

THE LIME SPIDERS
Slave Girl (Citadel)
Lock up your video! Rock and roll, hey! Totally ignorant of the current feminist sensibilities, this is pubescent beer-drinking guitar stomping music. Angst from the acne battalions — my speakers love it. Ignore the lyric (is *that* what that is?) and get swept away. A three-minute relief from anything relevant or even vaguely real. You could stand that, couldn't you?
Times are tough for the Lime Spiders. Why don't you take a trip back to the stoneage with me? Lots of bashing and screaming and bouts of pulling-out pulsing organs to relieve the tension. I think bratwurst and tomato motif wallpaper could be "in" this year.

NORM & T.V.: "Did we pass the audition?
ED.: "Yeah, but you failed the screen test."



RAM CHARTZ

NEW RELEASES

SINGLES

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	1	1	LIME SPIDERS	Slave Girl	Citadel
2	—	2	THE MODELS	Big On Love	Mushroom
3	2	1	DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS	Soul Kind Of Feeling	White
4	—	4	CRYSTAL SET	A Drop In The Ocean	Survival
5	—	5	JOHN KENNEDY	Forget	Waterfront
6	—	6	HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS	Throw Your Arms Around Me	White
7	3	2	THE MACHINATIONS	No Say In It	White
8	10	8	PAM & THE PASHIONS	Summertime All 'Round The...	HOT
9	4	4	ACID DROPS	Surfin' Prostitute Beat	Greasy Pop
10	6	6	X	Mother	X Music
11	15	3	MUSHROOM PLANET	Mmm...	HOT
12	—	12	THE APARTMENTS	All You Wanted	HOT
13	—	13	THE CELIBATE RIFLES	Sometimes (I Wouldn't...)	HOT
14	—	14	UNCANNY X MEN	Beachparty	Mushroom
15	14	14	ROSE TATTOO	I Wish	Alberts
16	9	1	BEASTS OF BOURBON	Psycho	Green
17	16	8	HOI POLLOI	Kid Octane	Hoi Polloi
18	—	18	NON STOP DANCERS	Shake This City	EMI
19	—	19	SCRAP MUSEUM	Say Die	Rampant
20	7	7	AUSTEN TAYSHUS	Phantom Shuffle	Regular

ALBUMS

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	1	1	MIDNIGHT OIL	Red Sails In The Sunset	CBS
2	—	2	VARIOUS	Not So Humdrum	Abberrant
3	2	2	FLAMING HANDS	Flaming Hands	Big Time
4	3	1	VARIOUS	Asleep At The Wheel	Au-Go-Go
5	4	1	CORPSE GRINDERS	Corpse Grinders	Man Made
6	5	4	VARIOUS	Sound Of Sydney, Volume 2	Method
7	12	7	LAUGHING CLOWNS	History of Rock'n'Roll...	HOT
8	8	8	DROPBEARS	Dropbears	WEA
9	6	1	THE SCIENTISTS	This Heart Doesn't Run...	Au-Go-Go
10	14	10	LAWSON SQUARE INFIRMARY	Lawson Square Infirmary	HOT
11	13	2	HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS	Jaws Of Life	White
12	—	12	THE HITMEN	Tora Tora DTK	Festival
13	—	13	MADROOM	Madroom	Dog Records
14	10	5	INXS	The Swing	WEA
15	—	15	SPY VS SPY	Meet Us Inside	Powderworks
16	7	2	NO NONSENSE	Around Tuit	EMI
17	—	17	ROSE TATTOO	Southern Stars	Alberta
18	9	6	JIMMY BARNES	Bodyswerve	Mushroom
19	—	19	THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS	Tales Of The Unexpected	HOT
20	15	1	THE SAINTS	A Little Madness To Be Free	RCA

The information for these charts was supplied by shops in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane. ©HAYWIRE PRODUCTIONS 1984.

THE 2XX selection

BRONSKI BEAT ..... The Age Of Consent
MODELS ..... Big On Love
LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX ..... Lizzy Mercier Descloux
MIDNIGHT OIL .... Red Sails In The Sunset
VARIOUS ARTISTS ..... Sounds Of Sydney Vol. 2
FLOY JOY ..... Burn Down A Rhythm
BO DIDDLEY ..... Ain't It Good To Be Free
FLAMING HANDS ..... Flaming Hands
VARIOUS ARTISTS ... Asleep At The Wheel
BILLY BRAGG . Brewing Up With Billy Bragg
QED ..... Solo And More
UB40 ..... Nkomo A Go Go
VARIOUS ..... Lawson Square Infirmary
GO BETWEENS ..... Bachelor Kisses
DOUBT ..... No Compassion
BLUE NILE ..... Tinsel Town In The Rain
MACHINATIONS ..... No Say In It
CUCKOOS ..... Waxworks
MIAMI SOUND MACHINE ..... Dr Beat
BLUEBELLS ..... Sisters
SCRIBBLE ..... Adaptability
LAUGHING CLOWNS ..... History Of Rock N Roll Vol. 1
ANIMAL NIGHTLIFE ..... Mr Solitaire
DROP BEARS ..... Untitled
NICK LOWE & HIS COWBOY OUTFIT ..... Nick Lowe And His Cowboy Outfit
MIX ..... Do You Do It?
SADE ..... Smooth Operator
NEW FIVE ..... Every Minute
DEPECHE MODE ..... Master & Servant
TENEMENT DANCE ..... Wild West

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SINGLES ALBUMS

JANEY STREET Say Hello To Ronnie (FES)
BLUE IN HEAVEN ..... Julie Cry (FES)
NATIONAL ANTHEM ...Chapter One (FES)
COBBERS* . The Endangered Species (FES)
JIMMY BARNES* ..... Promise Me You'll Call (FES)
HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS* ..... Throw Your Arms Around Me (FES)
PAT BENATAR ..... We Belong (FES)
SPANDAU BALLET ....Highly Strung (FES)
FEELABELLIA ..... Feel It (FES)
U2 ..... The Unforgettable Fire (FES)
SPLIT ENZ* ..... One Mouth Is Fed (FES)

BIG COUNTRY ..... East Of Eden (POL)
THE STYLE COUNCIL ..... Shout To The Top (POL)
JOHN PAUL YOUNG .....LA Sunset (POL)
PAMELA STANLEY ..... Coming Out Of Hiding (POL)
FRIENDS AGAIN ..... Lullaby No. 2 (POL)
TYZIK ..... Jammin' In Manhattan (POL)
FLESH FOR LULU ..... Restless (POL)
ELTON JOHN ..... Who Wears These Shoes (POL)

RONNIE MILSAP . She Loves My Car (RCA)
LEE CONWAY* ..... The Bell (RCA)
JIMMY ROSELLI ..... When Your Old Wedding Ring Was New (RCA)
ROSE MARIE .....Rock'n'Roll Waltz (RCA)
ALLNITERS*I Saw You First In Mexico (RCA)
LIONEL RICHIE ..... Penny Lover (RCA)
FX ..... Neighbours (RCA)

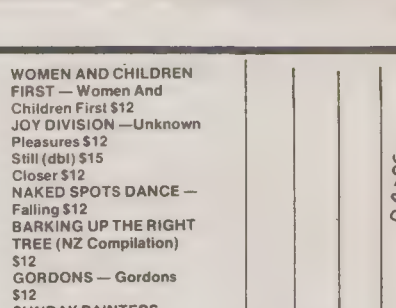
SCANDAL ..... Hands Tied (CBS)
THE STRANGLERS .....Skin Deep (CBS)
THE HUMAN LEAGUE ..... Louise (CBS)
HELEN TERRY ..... Stuttering (CBS)
DEAD OR ALIVE ..... That's The Way (I Like It) (CBS)
THE CELIBATE RIFLES* ..... Sometimes . (I Wouldn't Live Here If You Paid Me) (CBS)
BILLY JOEL ..... Keeping The Faith (CBS)
CYNDI LAUPER ..... All Through The Night (CBS)
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN ..... Couldn't Stand The Weather (CBS)
SHAKIN' STEVENS ..A Letter To You (CBS)

VAN STEPHENSON ..... What The Big Girls Do (WEA)
ALPHAVILLE . Sounds Like A Melody (WEA)
VAN HALEN .....Hot For Teacher (WEA)
CHAKA KHAN ..... I Feel For You (WEA)
MARC ANTHONY THOMSON ..... So Fine (WEA)
RANDY HALL I've Been Watching You (WEA)

THE RADIATORS* ../ Life's A Gamble (EMI)
PSEUDO ECHO* ..... Stranger In Me (EMI)
LITTLE RIVER BAND* .Playing To Win (EMI)
ANDY CALTECKS ..... Big Hat On (EMI)
THE DEL FUEGOS . Backseat Nothing (EMI)
ERIC BOGLE ..... Lock-Keeper (LAR)

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS* ..... Tales Of The Unexpected (HOT)
VARIOUS* ..... No Worries-Australian Comp. (HOT)
THE HONEYDRIPPERS Volume One (WEA)
APOLLONIA 6 ..... Apollonia 6 (WEA)
BIG COUNTRY ..... Steeltown (POL)
KISS ..... Animalize (POL)
DEEP PURPLE ..... Perfect Strangers (POL)
LIONEL RICHIE ... Can't Slow Down (RCA)
HALL AND OATES ... Big Bam Boom (RCA)
TIM CONNOR ..... One More Road (RCA)
SPY VS SPY* ..... Meet Us Inside (RCA)
JIM MUIR ..... A Thing Called Love (RCA)
DURAN DURAN ..... Arena (EMI)
PAINTERS AND DOCKERS* ..... Love Planet (EMI)
DAN HILL .....Love In The Shadows (EMI)
FLASH AND THE PAN* ..... Early Morning Wake Up Call (EMI)
QED* ..... Animal Magic (EMI)
TALKING HEADS .Stop Making Sense (EMI)
PAT BENATAR ..... Tropico (FES)
FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD .....Welcome To the Pleasure Dome (FES)
ROGER HODGSON ..... In The Eye Of The Storm (FES)
D.D. SMASH* ..... The Optimist (FES)
THE HITMEN* .....Tora Tora DTK (FES)
VARIOUS .....Once Upon A Time (FES)
JETHRO TULL ..... Under Wraps (FES)
ALISON MOYET .....Alf (CBS)
SCANDAL ..... Warrior (CBS)
CABARET VOLTAIRE Micro-Phonies (CBS)
MANOWAR .... Sign Of The Hammer (CBS)
TOTO ..... Isolation (CBS)
WHAM! .....Make It Big (CBS)
MATTHEW WILDER ..... Bouncin' Off The Walls (CBS)
NEW HARLEM BAND* ..... Drop Me Off In Carlton (LAR)
SHEARERS NIGHTMARE* ..... Burning Sleepers (LAR)

LAR = Larrikin
* Denotes Australasian Artist



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THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS (New LP) Late Oct. SCREAMING TRIBESMEN (New single on Citadel) Late Oct.

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— Blue Monday $6
— Confusion $6
— Thieves Like Us $5
— 1981-1982 ..... $8
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— What Difference Does It Make? $6
IDIOT SAVANT — Idiot Savant $5
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SEEN & HEARD

■ RECORDS ■ GIGS ■ MOVIES ■ BOOKS

Terri Nunn (Pic: Ian Greene)

GO-BETWEENS
Spring Hill Fair
(Sire)

To summarise the Go-Betweens' appeal would be a destructive exercise, because the core of their charm is a moveable feast. From the lush beauty of their last long-player, *Before Hollywood*, to the arid charms of this record, they have forged a blurred-at-the-edges familiarity that's both warm and desolate, aggressive and friendly.

Spring Hill Fair is further evidence of the intelligence of the Forster McLennan writing partnership, and benefits from a relaxation that has allowed their ideas to mature.

There's an endearing imperfection to this record, but it's a calculation of style rather than incompetence of design. In places, the vocals quaver dangerously as out-of-focus love songs paint a picture of the kind of melancholia that's impossible to forge. Songs like *Part Company* and *Draining The Pool For You* are a desolate pragmatism, a resignation to the vagaries of affection, but they never twinge.

The creeping poetic narrative of *River Of Money*, coupled as it is with subterranean guitar chords, delves deeper into the Go-Betweens' psyche — quintessentially Australian yet universally recognised.

Their songs are not unlike sepia-tinted photographs or black and white movies — never far from reality, yet always touched with disaffection or distance that adds to their curious appeal.

But overall, the Go-Betweens retain and develop a particular style of their own. If some of their blood spills into our veins, there might be signs of recovery on the horizon.

HELEN FITZGERALD

BERLIN/SOFT TOYS/GEISHA DETAIL
(Roxon, Selina's, Sydney)

"AAAARGH!" I hear you say. Synthesiser bands — tight pants, smoke machines, son-of-silk shirts, bored expressions and starched hairdos. Even the mere thought of seeing a "synth" band is enough to put most punters (myself included) off. Fair enough, but anyone who did turn their nose up at Berlin that night missed out on something beyond expectations.

First things first, though. I arrived late, and consequently missed the first act. Sorry. I did see GEISHA DETAIL though, and while I don't want to be unnecessarily rude about them, they. . . er, bored me to tears. God knows how long they were on for — it seemed like years — but as far as I (and a good deal of the audience) were concerned, they failed to produce even the slightest glimmer of a spark. Admittedly the acoustics were abominable — a malady which plagued all of the bands — but even when an odd snatch of melody did escape the quagmire of bass and drums, the vast majority of us remained largely aloof. Indeed, watching this five-piece flummox their way through a monotonous collection of synth-soaked toons with nary a facial expression or movement was enough to make quite a few of us restless.

SOFT TOYS were not a whole lot better, although they did at least have a stab at getting the crowd to their feet — and they were not totally unsuccessful. Still, like their predecessors, Soft Toys failed to show any flair; their songs were samey and unimaginative, and the lead singer kept communication with the audience to an absolute minimum. Maybe the band had too much to do — the lead singer doubled as a guitarist, the other guitarist on trumpet, and the keyboard player on sax. The bass and drums braved various intricate rhythmic patterns — for the guitars and synth to flounder on. Audience response was a little more encouraging, but the Soft Toys still managed to sound like about a million other bands.

Finally, BERLIN came on — accompanied by some thunderous intro music and genuine applause. They were explosive. Throughout their lengthy set (including one or two encores), they kept the whole crowd enthralled — each individual player was outstanding. Bassist (and principal songwriter) John Crawford and guitarist Ric Olsen engaged in lots of leaping about without losing the musical plot, and also featured in the world's first plectrum-throwing battle! Synthesists Dave Diamond and Matt Reid injected an unexpected amount of imagination into what they played, creating as many weird sounds as furious, pulsing melodies. Drummer Rob Brill was faultless, and even the backing singer was worthy of equal time.

But the focus of attention was always going to be lead vocalist Terri Nunn. From her first steps on stage to her last "Goodnight!" after the final encore, she kept the audience firmly entranced, weaving through a maze of theatrics with unabashed sexuality. Highlights of the night included the band's three singles, as well as a great cover of Prince's *Controversy*. I'd heard mixed reactions about the band live, but tonight they were brilliant. Enough.

MICHAEL ROBERTS

Feel it, Stevie (Pic: Ian Greene)

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN & DOUBLE TROUBLE
(Opera House, Sydney)

***Couldn't Stand The Weather??* Yeah, know what you mean, sport. . . dragged out on a night like this, the city's already a giant sponge soaked in neon-tinged torrents of rain, and the wind's ripping round our ears like a chilled lassoo. All because I promised the kid I'd take him to the Opera House — said some cowboy hero of his was puttin' on a display of fancy shootin'. With a name like that, he's bound to be wearin' sheepskins — yeah, sensible attire on a night like this. Probably got a ten-gallon hat an' all — all the better to catch the rain in. Ah well, it *is* the kid's birthday. . . better let 'im have his way.**

"Hey, dad! Lookit all the westies! More beards'n' hair than one of those late-night Jesus commercials you let me stay up for! An' what's that funny smell? Can I've some popcorn? C'mon dad, *pleeeeze*. . ."

Siddown and shaddap, the show's about to start.

"Hey dad! Check out his *gun*! Gotta be the biggest six-shooter I ever saw! Hey dad! This sure beats those ol' Matt Dillon videos of yours. An' hey! Lookit the *suits!* These guys are in *colour!* An' whadabout the hat! Huh, dad??"

Sssssshhhhhh, or I'll belt you one.

"Hey dad! Those ain't no guns. . . where's the BANG!? Where's the blood?! Where's the *smoke?!* What sort o' cowboys are these??"

OK, OK... Sorry son, the game's up. I've lured you here under falso pretences. I just wanted to show you a glimpse of the past — when men were men, when men wore hats, and when musicians played *guitars*. Hear that sound? Let's hear one of your synth-wimps squeeze *that* out of a silicon chip! And see those funny-looking wooden tubs over there? They's drums, son, *real drums* — make a good ol' noise, huh? Check that guy on the right; yeah, the fat one with the pork-pie hat. He's playing a bass! Great li'l rumble, eh? Regular shootout, this. . ain't that Stevie Ray quick on the draw? Hey, an' he's got good cover too — that's *Voodoo Chile*, you know, your grandad's favourite tune. . .

"Hey dad! What's *this??* Isn't that *Mary Had A Little Lamb* he's singin'? What sort sissy is this Stevie Ray Vaughan, anyway?"

Shaddap and *lissen*! Check that amazing hammering technique! He's makin' that goddamn axe *talk!* Wow, looky there! He's playin' it behind his back, just like Hendrix! This guy's unreal! Jeeze, *incredible!* That guitar rag's faster'n' a greased cheetah! Oh, Lordy. . . he's doin' a cross between *Interstellar Overdrive* and *Third Stone From The Sun!* God almighty!

"Dad. . .? DAD?! Remember what the doctor said. . . too much excitement. . . the ol' ticker. . ."

SHADDAP KID! Can't you appreciate *real music??!*

PHIL STAFFORD

VILE

MELTING SKYSCRAPERS
30 Strawberry Hill Hotel

MILKY BAR KIDS
28 Manzil
30 Cumberland College
2 Hopetoun Hotel

MINDSWEEPERS
23 Mona Vale Hotel
29 Manzil

MIRRORED IMAGE
23 Sth. Districts Tennis
24 Chester Hill Hotel
30 Local Inn
1 Tourmaline Hotel

MOTIVATORS
24 Selinas

THE MOOD
30 Picadilly Hotel

MUSTARD CLUB
23 Illawarra Builders

THE NATURALS
23 Greenfields Tav.
24 Carmens
25 Avalon RSL
26 Manzil
30 Cronulla Workers
1 Wollongong Town Hall
3 Manzil
6 Cronulla Leagues

NAUGHTY RHYTHMS
24 Picadilly Hotel

NON STOP DANCERS
23 Mona Vale Hotel
29 Nth. Ryde RSL
30 Revesby Workers
5 Palais Royale
6 Sheilas

OBSESSION
24 Dee Why Hotel

VICKI O'KEEFE
24 Tourmaline Hotel
30 Chester Hill Hotel

OTHER VOICES
28 Mosman Hotel

THE PAPERS
23 MacLean Bowling
24 Jacaranda Hotel, Grafton
30 Ballina Henry Rous Hotel

PARTY GIRLS
23 St. Marys Band
24 Chevron
25 Parkway Hotel
30 Rooty Hill RSL
2 St. George Sailing

PLAN B
30 Collegians

PLAYBOYS
23 Botany RSL
25 Dee Why Hotel
2 Dee Why Hotel
6 Sheridan Hotel

THE PROMISE
30 Picadilly Hotel
1 Local Inn
4 Picadilly Hotel
5 Hornsby RSL
6 Caringbah Inn

QED
23 Wentworthville Leagues
24 Carmens
26 Newcastle Uni.
29 Sweethearts
30 Blacktown RSL
1 Local Inn
4 Didis
5 Hornsby RSL
6 Caringbah Inn

RADIATORS
23 Central Coast Leagues

RUSTY ROMEOS
24 Sans Souci Hotel
30 Lismore Hotel

SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
23 Royal Hotel
30 Strawberry Hill Hotel
1 Carmens

SEAMONSTERS
29 Manzil
1 Doyalson RSL

SHOOTING SCHOOL
29 Sweethearts
30 Campbelltown Leagues

SILENT TYPES
25 Sutherland Ent. Cent.
30 Caringbah Inn

SKOLARS
23 Mona Vale Hotel

SOFT TOYS
28 Hopetoun Hotel
30 Cumberland College

STORMY MONDAY
23 Syd. Cove Tav.
24 Corrimal Leagues
25 Nth. Syd. Leagues
27 Stallions
28 Sheilas
29 Scandals
30 St. Marys Band
1 Hawkesbury Sports

STRANGE TENANTS
27 Bankstown RSL
28 Hordern Pavilion (Early)
28 Sweethearts (Late)
29 Dee Why Hotel (Early)
29 Local Inn (Late)
30 Royals Rugby (ACT)
1 Syd. Cove Tav.

SUNNYBOYS
24 Pt. Kembla Leagues
27 Sweethearts
28 Dee Why Hotel
29Belmont 16' Sailing
30 Cronulla Workers
1 Pt. Kembla Leagues
2 Western Sub. Leagues

TACTICS
23 Mona Vale Hotel

THIN ICE OBSESSION
24 Dee Why Hotel

3 MUSKETEERS
23 Propaganda

THE TOUCHED
24 Lismore Hotel
28 Whitehorse Hotel
1 Vulcan Hotel
5 Whitehorse Hotel

THE TURKEYS
23 Riverina Rules
24 Royals Rugby (ACT)
25 Labour Club (ACT)
27 Royals Rugby (ACT)
29 Royals Rugfby (ACT)
30 Labour Club (ACT)
1 Royals Rugby (ACT)
3 Stallions
4 Stallions

UNCANNY X—MEN
w23 Chevron
24 Local Inn (Early)
24 Bankstown RSL (Late)
25 Caringbah Inn

UNDERCOVERS
23 Imperial Hotel
25 Nth. Cronulla Hotel
29 Namatjira Hotel
6 Riverwood Hotel

VENETIANS
30 Emerton Youth Cent.
1 Palais Royale
6 Cronulla Leagues

LEE WALKER BAND
28 Lavington Sports
30 Tumut RSL
1 Manning River Sailing

A.T. WELLS
23 Hopetoun Hotel
24 Erina Arb
28 Greenfields Tav.

WENDY AND THE ROCKETTS
5 St. George Sailing
6 Sweethearts

X
24 Syd. Cove Tav.

THE YOUNG LIONS
23 Bluegum Hotel
24 Dee Why Hotel
25 Bankstown Sports
30 Tourmaline Hotel
1 Chevron

ZIPS
23 Lithgow Workers
24 Lithgow Workers
29 Telford Lodge
30 Lithgow Wokers
1 Panthers

VIC.

AIRPLAY
29 Canopy Club
30 Canopy Club
1 Canopy Club

ARMS AND LEGS
27 Prospect Hill Hotel
28 Uno Arriba
30 De Marcos Hotel
1 The Club

ASTRO BOY
23 Pier Hotel
24 Westside Nite Spot
25 Central Club

AUSSIE MAYO
23 Royal Hotel
24 Beaumaris Hotel
27 De Marcos Hotel
1 Provincial Hotel
6 Welshpool Hotel

AUSTRALIAN CRAWL
23 Pier Hotel
24 Westside Nite Spot
25 Central Club

CAMOUFLAGE
23 Duke Of Endinburgh
30 Beaumaris Hotel

CATCH 22
4 De Marcos Hotel
6 Portsea Hotel

COLD CRUSADE
24 Prospect Hill Hotel

CUTTERS
24 Metone Hotel (Arvo)
24 Terminus Hotel (Nite)

DROPBEARS
25 Eureka Hotel

DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
23 Ferntree Gully Hotel
24 Central Club
25 Pier Hotel

FLAMING HANDS
23 The Venue
24 Armadale Hotel
25 Prospect Hill Hotel

F.X.
23 Central Club
24 Village Green

THE GANGSTERS
6 Beaumaris Hotel

GIMIX
23 Beaumaris Hotel
24 Bundoora Hotel
29 Beaumaris Hotel
30 Princes Highway Hotel
2 The Cockpit

GRAND WAZOO
23 Malvern Town Hall

HUXTON CREEPERS
23 Malvern Town Hall

LAUGHING CLOWNS
23 The Club
24 The Ballroom
25 The Ballroom
26 Inflation

MACHINATIONS
29 The Venue
30 Pier Hotel
1 Dorsett Gardens
2 Fest. Hall

MODELS
29 The Venue
30 Pier Hotel
1 Dorsett Gardens
2 Fest. Hall

NO NONSENSE
24 Village Green

BRENT PARLANE
23 Edwards Tav.

PR
23 Prospect Hill Hotel
1 Broadford Festival

ROBIN AND THE HOODS
24 Sherbourne Hotel
1 Astradome

GEORGE SMILOVICI
23 Grainstore Tav. (Early)
23 Billboard (Late)
24 The Venue (Early)
24 Central Club (Late)

SOLE TWISTERS
23 Creole Club

SPANIARDS
23 De Marcos Hotel
24 Prospect Hill Hotel

SURVIVAL
23 Princes Highway Hotel
25 Billboard
26 Billboard
28 De Marcos Hotel
29 Portsea Hotel
30 Royal Hotel
1 Beaumaris Hotel
5 De Marcos Hotel

TRUE BROS
28 Climax Club
5 Climax Club

UNCANNY X—MEN
2 Central Club

LEE WALKER BAND
23 Rosebud RSL
24 De Marcos Hotel
29 Sherbourne Hotel

JOHN PAUL YOUNG
23 Moonee Ponds Tav.
24 Billboard
25 Provincial Hotel
27 Collandina

S.A.

LAUGHING CLOWNS
30 Lark And Tinas
1 Pharoahs
2 Tivoli

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS
1 Lark And Tinas
2 Austral Hotel

MINIMUM CHIPS
23 Old Lion Hotel
24 Findon Hotel
25 Pharoahs
29 Clare High (Lunch)
30 Pt. Augustus High (Lunch)
30 West Augustus Rugby (Nite)
1 Telford Westlands (Arvo)
2 Telford Westlands (Arvo)
4 Eyre High (Lunch)
5 Cowell High (Lunch)
6 Cleve Area School (Lunch)

THE MOVIES
30 Murray Bridge Comm. Club
1 Grosvenor Hotel

OL'55
23 Findon Hotel
24 The Ranch
25 Glenell Rugby

QLD.

THE BEATNIX
23 Caesars, Underwood
24 Homestead Hotel
25 Bombay Rock

CALLBOYS
23 Swizzles
30 Miami Hotel
1 Castle Hotel
5 Caesars Palace
6 Caesars Palace

CLAPPING HAND
23 Jet Club

DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
6 Bombay Rock

ELEVEN ELEVEN
30 Terminus

THE GANGSTERS
23 The Resort
24 The Resort
25 The Resort
26 The Resort
27 The Resort
28 The Resort
29 The Resort
30 The Resort
1 The Resort
2 The Resort

INDECISIVES
23 James Cook Uni.
24 Mediteranian Village
2 Seaview Hotel

MACHINATIONS
23 Easts Leagues
24 Jet Club

MODELS
23 Easts Leagues
24 Jet Club

NEON PARK
25 Jet Club

NON STOP DANCERS
25 Jet Club

RUM JUNGLE
23 Club Z
3 Bombay Rock

SIGH OF RELIEF
1 Mooloolaba Hotel
2 D.D.I.A.E.

STRANGE TENANTS
23 Bombay Rock
24 Caesars, Ipswitch
25 Easts Leagues

LEE WALKER BAND
3 The Resort
4 The Resort
5 The Resort
6 The Resort

ZARSOFF BROS
28 Jet Club
30 Mansfield Tav.
2 Albert Park (Arvo)
2 Bombay Rock (Nite)

W.A.

CRIME AND THE WEATHER
1 Equator

HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
23 W.A.I.T.
24 Equator
25 Equator

OMEN INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

ERIC BURDON BAND

AUSTRALIAN TOUR NOV·DEC 1984

NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Fri 23	Caringbah Inn	Sat 1	Bombay Rock Gold Coast
Sat 24	Dee Why Hotel — Early	Sun 2	Easts Leagues Brisbane
	Selinas — Late	Tues 4	Canberra Royals Club
Sun 25	Penrith Leagues	Wed 5	Local Inn
Mon 26	Hornsby RSL	Thurs 6	Shellharbour Workers
Wed 28	Newcastle Workers	Fri 7	Doyalson RSL
Fri 30	Glen Hotel Brisbane	Sat 8	Bankstown RSL
		10-11	Bridgeway Hotel Adelaide
		12-15	MELBOURNE

SEEN & HEARD

RECORDS ■ GIGS ■ MOVIES ■ BOOKS

And now, some Mouth from our sponsor...

VIDEODROME

Directed by David Cronenberg
Starring Debbie Harry, James Woods, Les Carlson

David Cronenberg is one of those horror film directors who likes to spread a little spurious intellectuality on the severed tendons, and this time he looks as if he is taking his cult rep seriously.

***Videodrome* could have been quite a corker if he'd had the brainpower to sustain his initial ideas. He hadn't, it ducks into gore, but it remains somewhere between interesting and digusting for much of the time.**

Max Renn (James Woods) runs a small cable TV company specialising in soft-core porn. Frustrated, he uses Harlan (Peter Dvorsky) to comb the pirate transmissions for something stronger, and discovers a show called *Videodrome.* This is as strong as it comes, since all the stars are whipped or strangled to death on screen. It is snuff TV, and it hooks into our Max in a worrying way.

He starts an affair with radio help-line personality Nicki Brand (Debbie Harry) who is even more susceptible than he, and she's soon encouraging him to ram needles through her ears and stub out fags on her breasts during their petting sessions.

***Videodrome,* we discover (and wish we hadn't), creates a tumour in the brain of the viewer, and produces the most godawful hallucinations. Not put off in the slightest, Max tracks its manufacture to the media guru, Brian O'Blivion — a species of joke on Marshall McLuhan — but since his death, the idea has fallen into the wrong hands, and is being used for mind control by Barry Convex (Les Carlson). O'Blivion's daughter Bianca (Sonja Smits) fights for the control of poor Max, who is by now unable to distinguish between the screen and reality.**

That's the least of his worries, as he has developed a large bubbling hole in his stomach. He loses his gun in there somewhere, and the rival networks keep sticking video cassettes into him to programme his behaviour. Qualified midwives should find this easier to watch than I did, though who will survive Max's discovery of the slimy gun literally driving roots into his wrist I do not know.

Nicki has disappeared into the *Videodrome* show, but pops up on screen from time to time to manipulate Max. That pretty mouth, in fact, comes right out of the screen at him, billowing, and at the end encourages him to shoot himself and be born again, the New Flesh. Max mutates from hustler to assassin to dead. I just made it to the exit.

The most interesting idea in the film concerns choking the prurient with their own dreams to prune the race. Cable TV, like the boom in video, has spawned the stuff that lives under the stones, and a lot of people are getting rich on the transaction while the viewers get weirder. Pity Cronenberg didn't decide to come in lighter on that — probably too embarrassed by his own situation.

Oh, Debbie Harry is fine, and like the excellent James Woods, should avoid vehicles for special effects.

BRIAN CASE

MIDNIGHT OIL
Red Sails In The Sunset (CBS/Sprint)

Okay, so it's time to crank some action into this piece. Time to boost the volume, jam it into the ceiling 'til the snares actually *craaaack!* Time to get some perspective on this twelve-inch slice of dead dinosaur's poop, a record that hasn't been off the turntable for at least a fortnight and threatens to have such a dramatic impact on this addled excuse for a brain that it may never find its way back into the sleeves of Kimura's mind-boggling artwork.

Has it really come to this, when the conscientious gardener can desert his patch of Eden for twelve inches of salvation?! (*Shuddup down the back!*) When a normally sane and rational human being can go so far off the deep end that he'll engage in hideous arguments with people he's never even set eyes on before, just 'cos they've got some ridiculous criticism, some totally unjustifiable warped twisted severely unhinged attitude that they don't like this album because *"It's too 'accessible'"* or, the horror, *"It sounds too Australian!?"*

Has it really come to this when *the fan* can lose such control of his own sense of propriety as to actually stoop so low as to argue, passionately and impulsively, in defence of a mere sound recording? A primitive artifact that isn't even given the cultural credence bestowed upon something as tangible as a book or a film or even a damned opera?!

Well yes, it has. When faced with people who've got wombats in the top paddock, one feels compelled to call in an air strike and nuke the silly buggers, plunging into the lowest, meanest emotionally charged kneejerk reactions in defence of the backyard barbie. Look, I'm really sorry, I honestly am, because this year I've been pleasantly surprised —excited even — by the standard and the development of albums by Australian recording artists. Bathing in a sense of smug satisfaction, reflecting on the glories of a music scene that, while losing impetus in live performance, has reached a wonderful maturity on record. Yes, I thought, in 1984 Australian bands finally came to grips with the potential of the studio, had finally come of age, had finally reached that stage of being able to develop ideas and present them as a cohesive, impressive whole.

And then *Red Sails* came along and blew it all out the window. Just stomped the competition so badly it should, if there's any justice in the world, deal that ultimate devastating death blow to the entire future of recorded music. 'Cos to even attempt anything else simply wouldn't be worth the effort. *There is no point. It has been done.* And anything else would be a shameful waste of time and money, a sinful concession to the continued existence of people like the record company PR who called up recently, urging me to interview some irrelevant no-talent Canadian wimp because *"he's a real good lookin' guy."*

Okay, so you've probably heard *When The Generals Talk* on the radio. (Just how bankrupt can that medium's programmers be, to pick the blandest track from the album for maximum immediate exposure? Is there no sense of adventure above the fifth floor??) Sung by drummer Rob Hirst (making his debut as a lead vocalist), its insipid sloganeering does as much to detract from the depth of *Red Sails* as drummer Topper Headon's *Rock The Casbah* did for The Clash with *Combat Rock.* Or *US Forces* from *10-1.* (Even that war-mongering thug Ian Sinclair is reported to have danced to that one!) *When The Generals Talk* is just the sort of singalong ditty fodder with inconclusive lyrics that these Alfred E. Neuman clones (*What Me Worry*) in the upper echelons of radio just love to plaster the airwaves with.

So let's scrap that one, leave it on the junkheap along with the rest of that sixth grade reject poetry like *Naked Flame. EDITOR! EDITOR! CUT THIS TAPE!! That's right, just drop that song in the dustbin, hit it with half a pound of napalm and get off on the pretty colours.*

See? Simple, wasn't it? Painless even. And now, with that off our chests, we can safely explore the grandeur of *Red Sails In The Sunset.* Because it is an extraordinary album from a band that has taken amazing quantum leaps with each new release. From *Midnight Oil* to *Head Injuries* to *Bird Noises* to *Place Without A Postcard* to *10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1* to *Red Sails In The Sunset*, this band has proven that it should never be underestimated. Each recording has brought more power, more depth of expression, and deeper exploration of that curious beast, the Australian Psyche.

Or perhaps that's a subject that's a little too heavy to get into just here. Suffice to say that through recordings like this, Midnight Oil can realise what few other artists ever achieve. And that is to inspire and encourage discussion and debate through their manipulation of popular culture (in this case, rock music) by introducing ideas, thoughts, attitudes and concepts through something as accessible as a song. That they have managed to refine it into a unique and compelling artform says as much for their ability as it does for their spirit.

Like each of their previous recordings, *Red Sails* is a thoughtful ▶

2001 — A POSTCODE
(Kinsela's, Sydney)

(Pic: Patrick Riviere)

Back in the dim, dark ages of the Australian neo-Neolithic Period of the late fifties to early sixties, actors had three areas of honest employment. . . One was in radio and drama. Another was the scramble to be seen on incipient TV, usually in evening dress, holding a Sorbent toilet roll, with bad lighting showing up all flaws in complexion and credibility. But television was no place for an *honest actor,* being mainly for *'personalities'* and Johnny O'Keefe.

The third way was in Phillip St. Revues — the only live (as opposed to dead) theatre in Sydney at the time.

The Revue was 'New Theatre'. . . accessible, funny and daringly different. Its sketches chipped away at the foundations of the Establishment, of Society, Sex and Religion — pathetic little chips in the light of current spray-can obliteration. But it is possible that these Revues paved the way for the *Mavis Bramston Show* (first satire show on Oz TV), *Oz* Magazine, Barry Humphries, Reg Livermore and B.U.G.A.U.P.

Its job done, the Phillip St. Revue melted into history and the stars it created drifted into mainstream theatre. Robina Beard became Madge the Mad Manicurist, who for the last twenty years has been plunging clients' paws into slimy green dishwashing liquid for instant petrification.

The Revue itself has been petrified by current forms of theatre which do it better, so that anyone seeking knowledge of such fossil-matter can now look up Webster's International Dictionary, which defines a Revue as "a kind of burlesque or musical comedy in which recent events are reviewed by imitations of their salient features."

Or. . . you can go to Kinsela's and see a real live Revue in the flesh, with a suitably historic title: *2001 — A Postcode.* There, you will see 42 different sketches written by 17 authors, some of whom should know better. You will see three NIDA graduates, known for their TV and theatre work, one former opera student, one original from the Johnny O'Keefe Show and one world-class actress, all doing their best to endorse the Return of the Revue.

You will laugh, chortle, be amused, clap and ultimately forget the repertoire. Next morning, you will try to remember what you saw and give up. So let's compare notes — here's mine.

'The Bar School': waitress-in-training quizzed on how to provide correct service; slouch, hide, be rude, and if Bob Hawke comes in, serve him a glass of mineral water with flashcubes and an Australian flag.

Cut to regulation leather-boy singing *A Kookaburra Sang In Taylor Square* to that well-known tune, um. . . er. . .

'Never Share A Stage With An Animal': Either they steal your act or fart in your face. Rod Dunbar makes makes an excellent duck.

The American Evangelist 'doin' it for Reagan', and on the local scene, Genevieve Mooy sings (as Hazel) *Don't Cry For Me, Andrew Peacock,* which originates from some recording by a well-known Los Angeles shopkeeper.

Then, the ALP National Squaredance goes down well, as does Myra De Groot's *Nightmare Song,* a well-researched dramalogue on all the action of *Sons And Daughters* over the last umpteen years reduced to three minutes. This is right and fitting.

Perhaps it is all summarised by Rod, in cloak and crown croaking Richard Harris: *'There is still a lot of money to be got from tireless Camelot. . .'* But my opinion is that Revue should be left to rest on its laurels.

ADELE BARNETT

and provocative piece of work. Unlike its predecessors though, *Red Sails In The Sunset* is *immediately* accessible. What has, in the past, all too often come across as harsh and abrasive — quirky bits of sound you really had to grit your teeth and bear for the first few hundred listens — has now been refined and polished. Which doesn't mean it's any less devastating. It simply means that you can get closer to the heart of this record. *(Howls of outrage fill the room, fans baying for blood, screaming for a return of the Birthday Party, demanding something to shock the neighbours into total cathartic oblivion while lobbing Foster's cans over the roof).*

But in developing their approach, the Oils have lost none of their edge. If anything, it's been enhanced by the bloody-minded determination to make a record that covers so many styles, encourages so many emotions and makes so many direct hits, that it cannot be ignored. In a land in which we're encouraged to take a long cool beer, the Oils have forsaken the lager in favour of a long cool look at the development of this, their Great South Land. Far beyond the sloganeering, they've tapped into their basic resources, rich veins of experience and research, and come up with a collection of songs, finely crafted and bonded with the strength of conviction, that literally ring with anger and pride, humour and humility.

It is, of course and for sure, a question of atmospherics. The art of painting a soundscape. Unlike many of their contemporaries, the Oils have always sought to conjure up evocative images through their use of sound. Even as far back as something like *Nothing Lost — Nothing Gained,* when their knowledge of the studio was so primitive and naive, they managed to produce a brooding passage so chilling, so clearly defined in its sense of resignation that even today it's difficult to walk away from. But I digress.

Not for these boys the abrasive three-chord power of rock'n'roll. Hell no! The brew isn't potent enough! Needs a little more subtlety; a little acoustic guitar, a drum fill here, some bells there, a touch of surge and sway, something that'll creep up and take your face off. Hell, this isn't rock'n'roll. . . It's *DRAMA!* Listen to something like *Shipyards Of New Zealand* and experience the intrigue, the carefully choreographed sense of dynamics, the sheer dramatic impact of something so huge, so utterly climactic that it's inconceivable that anyone could encapsulate such a haunting, enthralling, overpowering range of emotions into a mere 05:49:36. Like, let's make a movie!

Let's digress, just for the hell of it. I mean, can you imagine the mentality of this bunch of yobbos?! Call 'emselves rock'n'roll musicians, and whadda they do? Go to Japan to record an album. Japan! You can't even get drugs in Japan! And they expect to make a record that all these damned surfies sitting around bongs at Narrabeen or North Curl Curl are going to enjoy! The audacity of it, the sheer unadulterated silliness of it all. And what happens? They succeed! They make an album that even some insensible mung bean slumped there, in the bean bag, right next to the dead tinnies and the empty mull bowl, is going to consider as an all-pervading, enjoyable *experience.*

(Excuse me, doctor. I need a relapse. Wouldja mind putting side two on again?) Okay. Enough already. Let's get back to the script!

In the past, the Oils' lyrics have often suffered from being too clever. And it wasn't until they developed a sense of restraint and learned to pare their ideas down that they had any real hope of getting through to anyone who didn't have the wandering mentality of a schizoid mung bean. Where was I? Oh yeah, in the kitchen. No wait on. . . that there's been substantial lyrical development is unquestionable. More precise imagery has replaced the primal scream — but who's to say the angst-ridden scream was no more effective?. . . Okay, a case in point is *Sleep,* a number that, lyrically, recalls earlier songs like *Dust* and *Used & Abused.* By providing a sharper focus on the images, the songwriters are able to present *more* of them. What they once spent a whole song trying to describe is now presented in a single line, so that every line can pack a punch, covering all bases with an economy ticket. Back it up with a musical treatment that's as diverse as it is poignant, and you're presented with one helluva bus ride.

Mmmm, this question of development and economy is an interesting one. 'Cos on *Red Sails,* the Oils often test nerves they've prodded in the past. *Who Can Stand In The Way?* recalls the trilogy from *Place Without A Postcard (Love's On Sale/If Ned Kelly Was King/Lucky Country); Bells And Horns In The Back Of Beyond,* in which Garrett paddles out with the sort of repartee reminiscent of that in the songs mentioned above before being swamped by an Oils' surf instrumental — tubes'n'all — recalls numbers like *Wedding Cake island, Koala Sprint* and *Outside World;* which is not to say they're simply rehashes of old ideas. Far from it. Ideas and concerns have been refined and restructured, approached afresh with such a regard for exploration and development that what emerges is a true achievement, a pinnacle, a veritable triumph that stands alone.

Old concerns they've never had the confidence to attack before have been introduced. The Oils' concern for the plight of the aboriginal has finally surfaced on record with a pair of outstanding tracks, *Kosciusko* (sung by Rob Hirst) and *Jimmy Sharman's Boxers.* (Although it should be noted that in neither song is there a direct reference to aborigines, a further example of the lyrical development that has discarded sloganeering in favour of thought and allusion.)

Harrisburg takes the opposite approach in dealing with the Oils' most poignant anti-nuclear statement to date. It spells it out. The lyric isn't veiled in camouflage rhetoric, its message is simple: once the radiation gets in, you can't get it out. In this instance, sloganeering is used to great effect — without actually sliding into the overkill zone.

If this sounds like heavy going, fear not. Comical interludes abound — suggestions of emus rampaging through Pyrmont, Charlie McMahon's didjeridoo underpinning a highly suspect rockabilly rave-up *(Helps Me, Helps You),* a tacky Tokyo school brass band that sounds like it just sobered up after the sessions for Tom Waits *Swordfishtrombones* playing *Bakerman;* and I'll leave you to pick up on the rest.

Which is where I'm gonna wind this up, 'cos I wanna get out into the garden and dance to this platter. I'm just disappointed that Xavier Herbert never lived long enough to hear it, because here we have a truly majestic appraisal of the Australian condition.

ANDREW McMILLAN

DREAM SYNDICATE
Medicine Show
(A&M)

LA band the Dream Syndicate's debut album, *Days Of Wine And Roses,* was one of *the* records of 1983. It radiated music of raw beauty and deathly pallor, perfectly complementing lyrics that told strange stories of love amongst the ruined.

After that record, *Medicine Show* is something of a disappointment. The band hooked up with notorious producer Sandy Pearlman (he of Dictators, Pavlov's Dog, Blue Oyster Cult and early Clash infamy), and signed to A&M records in an attempt to crack the big time. The bad news is that somewhere along the way they've lost most of their striking idiosyncrasies, thus becoming no more than a conventional rock band.

On that level, it's not a complete failure. While Pearlman has homogenised the particular weirdness of their guitar-based attack, the quirkiness of singer/songwriter/rhythm guitarist Steve Wynn's singular compositions still manages to shine through.

Most of Side One is pretty good, especially songs like *Still Holding On To You, Daddy's Girl* and *Armed With An Empty Gun,* where Wynn's sensual imagery of violence and eroticism, redolent of such southern writers as Carson McCullers and William Faulkner, is backed up by lead guitarist Karl Precoda's unique combination of snarling, hissing guitar runs and ringing chords, that occupies a territory somewhere between the Byrds and the Velvet Underground.

It's Side Two where the Dream Syndicate's real failings become glaringly obvious. The main offender is *John Coltrane Stereo Blues,* a ten-minute piece that's based around a standard song structure that leaves plenty of room for lyrical stream-of-consciousness and raga-like improvisation. When this kind of thing works — as on the Doors' live version of *When The Music's Over* — it's magnificent, a dangerous combination of calculation and chance that explores rock'n'roll's outermost possibilities. When it fails, as it does here, it becomes merely interminable guitar-based noodling with silly, pointless lyrics that do little more than show up the Dream Syndicate's precious pretensions and lack of any real inspiration. Knowing who to rip off is half the battle, but doing it well is what *really* counts.

While *Medicine Show* will be a let-down to many of us long-time Dream Syndicate fans, Steve Wynn has gone on record as saying that he finds it far superior to the first album and that *Medicine Show* represents the direction they'll be pursuing in the future.

And given the range of possibilities hinted at by *Days Of Wine And Roses,* that's something of a major disappointment.

FRANK BRUNETTI

SEEN & HEARD

MADROOM/OTHER VOICES/ANOTHER MUSICK
(The Rehearsal Room, Redfern, Sydney)

The swathes of black thread, silver ribbon and white bandages do not conceal the essential squalor (there is no other word for it) of the Rehearsal Room. It's definitely the sort of place your parents warned you about. For all that, it's a wacko venue that always sends you away *thinking*, scratching your head, wondering, even if you are nursing ear damage at the same time.

The evening's recital begins with ANOTHER MUSICK — violin, trumpet, bass, drums, chants and music hold a highly esoteric but public conversation with one another. Those of us who don't understand the language were nevertheless taken by the varied rhythmic textures and passages of call and response between the trumpet and violin. The whole thing is underpinned by rich and burbling bass runs slightly reminiscent of one Jah Wobble. It has nothing to do with 'pop music'. None of the signs or cliches are there to spring the little triggers to your heart, so the whole thing becomes rather intellectual. Can we relate to this? Another Musick tell me that the trick is to stop thinking and just let the sounds carry you. (Where?) Familiarity is, no doubt, nine-tenths of the understanding. She's frowning, but nodding.

I thought I hadn't seen OTHER VOICES before, but when the earnest young singer began gyrating, the dim memory of some particularly gruesome night at the Trades came flooding back. They haven't changed much; didn't make a big impact then or now. Nice enough chiming guitar rock, but it seems that the law of diminishing returns is operating on the career of Other Voices.

At this stage, the night was dragging just a tad. "We wanted excitement!", grunted the audience, swatting cockroaches off their withered thighs. Fortunately, Sydney's own sovereigns of big band dog-rock were able to gird their loins and give it to us. After a dissipated start, MADROOM cranked themselves up to high gear, even managing to goad a sizeable section of the crowd into *dancing*. In the Rehearsal Room!

I take my hat off to Madroom. They are notable not only for their consistent inventiveness, but also for the blazing intensity they manage to summon up whenever they perform. It's this supreme confidence in what they have to say that sets them apart from the legion dabbling dilettantes of swamp. Madroom make you sit up and take notice. The guitar crashes and wails, the bass throbs, the drums appear in places where no drum ever appeared before, the violin skitters up and down your spine, and Goose wears his heart on his vocal chords.

Too mangy ever to arrive in the chain-store record racks of Middle Australia, Madroom are a precious gem in the tin-can crown of inner-city music. Become a subject. . .

WANDA JAMROZIK

CULTURE CLUB
Waking Up With The House On Fire
(Virgin)

If the title of the Club's third suggests panic, there's a good reason. The item simply isn't up to scratch. Distressing to relate, the silk-upholstered magic and easy crossing of musical boundaries which made *Kissing To Be Clever* and *Colour By Numbers* such damned alluring listening have evaporated. The cover's crap too, Assorted Images' worst since the ridiculous effort for Simple Minds' *Sparkle In The Rain.* But it's the songs which are really in need of a brain transplant.

Culture Club's secret weapon up until now has been their ability to appeal to just about anybody without being patronising or completely crass (with the possible exception of *Karma Chameleon,* but let's not quibble). There were tunes for the kids and the grans, and a sort of ready-to-wear philosophy for the troubled adolescent to "take on board". And the band could negotiate live shows with breezy confidence. That was then.

House On Fire sounds like not so much a band as a compilation of studio tracks, overdubbed to blazes and edited till kingdom come. Steve Levine is still here as producer, but the sound is thinner, less rounded. The Club's familiar aural sleight of hand has deserted them — *Hello Goodbye,* for instance, with its unspeakable metallic guitar, wouldn't have made it onto either preceding album because of its *sound,* let alone its dismal quality.

Opening tracks are often good clues to the likely result, and *Dangerous Man* is utterly feeble. George's voice is cramped and flat, and while efforts have been made to prop it up with weedy Staples Singers backing vocals, there's not much here for the Boy to wrap a tonsil around. There's very little tune and even less chorus.

Perhaps the cretinous *War Song* was intended as a warning shot. *'People are stupid',* gibbers George over and over again, as if to convince himself that sticking out a duff album at this stage won't matter after all. The Club's roots are suddenly showing, and it's not a pretty sight. The halfwit's Utopianism implicit in *War Song* is merely one example.

It looks like a case of grab it and see. *Crime Time* sounds like Showaddywaddy except the jokes are unintentional, and lines like *'Playing Fats Waller/Lipstick on your collar'* suggest that Culture Club have been even slower onto the jazz bandwagon than most of their contemporaries.

In *Mannequin,* again, they aim for a sort of doo-woppy boardwalk feel, with massed backing voices, brass section, and a solo muted trumpet which would have had Miles Davis splitting his sides laughing 25 years ago. And *this* is state of the art?

We might mention the funky Caribbean shuffle of *The Dive* (were it not for the fact that the song, like everything here, finishes before it ever really started), we might pause for a moment beside *The Medal Song* (were it not for the fact that it consists of a single cadence, pleasant but not enough). And we might, if we're lucky, manage to slip past the token ballad, *Mistake No 3,* unnoticed. 'Cos if we're spotted, we'll have to slit its throat silently and without mercy.

So that's it. *Waking Up With The House On Fire* finds Culture Club in sorry shape, lacking cohesion, direction and even a decent sound. I'd never have believed they could sound this laboured, but frankly it's difficult to sit through a whole side without *anything.* George's voice, once so seductive, now sounds harder and quite unmagical. Sensitive fans might be shocked by the beefcake-style shot of Mikey Craig included here, but it's all the stimulation they'll get from this rickety package.

Approach with extreme caution, if at all.

ADAM SWEETING

LAUGHING CLOWNS/
History Of Rock And Roll Volume I
(Hot)

Generally, there are two reasons for releasing compilations (besides recouping money!) The first is to provide a retrospective of hits or classics; the second is to "showcase" overlooked material, re-release limited editions, or try and (re)create interest. The Laughing Clowns, obviously, have released theirs for the latter reason.

Although released almost too late, this compilation will hopefully bring formative Clowns material (early 1980 — late 1982) to a wider audience. While receiving pitifully little in terms of public acclaim, the Clowns, and more particularly, Ed Kuepper — founder member and driving force — achieved a great deal as far as musical exploration goes. We saw the very beginnings of Kuepper's interest in percussive and horn-based jazz on the last (original) Saints album, *Prehistoric Sounds.* Here, temporarily winning the battle of musical wills that raged between himself and Chris Bailey, Kuepper peppered several tracks with riotous brass. There's even evidence of the first precursory steps into jazz syncopation.

So it was surprising that the gap between the demise of the early Saints and the first public appearance of the Laughing Clowns (the first lineup features on seven of the ten songs on this collection) was so wide. What the Clowns were trying to do live was directly responsible for many people seeking out other jazz-oriented artists, and exploring deeper — into the past — in search of artists who had, unfairly, been elevated onto a 'serious' plane: Coltrane, Davis, Mingus, Monk, Parker. People began to expose themselves to jazz, and more abstractly to the art of improvisation, and in turn began to better understand what the Clowns were attempting to do. They didn't always succeed, of course, but at least they investigated.

So, the Clowns found they could attract an audience hungry for new and exciting rhythms; but they could also send several of that audience scurrying for cover in serious distress at what some labelled "misdirected and badly executed" contemporary experimental music. Bob Farrell's sax playing (featured here prominently) was an early contender in the controversy stakes — you either loathed the abrasive, screeching squawk, or found it genuinely stimulating. There was much argument about the deliberate (or otherwise) flaunting of musical conventions. And of course, Ed Kuepper's voice and execution of his own lyrics remained high in the debate stakes — there were many who were convinced that he should be banned from opening his mouth on stage or record. Others found his droll, flat delivery the perfect instrument to articulate the Clowns' emerging vision.

Because of the famed 'difficulty' of Kuepper and the rest of the band, because of the newness of the structures they were creating, because of the stress on style over ability, the Laughing Clowns' first hurdle lay in striking up a rapport with studio engineers. It must have been a headache. It shows slightly on some of the early tracks — particularly *I Want To Scream* and *Holy Joe* — but not surprisingly, the damage is minimal.

On record, the Laughing Clowns are a different band — more restrained and sewn up, more concise, more accessible, and in many ways, more understandable. These ten songs capture them at their most startling, at their best. Besides Ed Kuepper, the only other constant member on this record — and in the current Clowns — is the unquestionably brilliant Jeffrey Wegener, on drums. Louise Elliot, who is also in the current lineup, first appears on the 1981 recording, *Theme From Mad Flies, Mad Flies* and plays on two other tracks. Her sax playing is markedly different from Bob Farrell's, but with the continually moving Clowns sound, there is no jarring change — just different sounds.

The lack of liner notes and appalling layout of the album are the only disappointments in this compilation — one that pays effective tribute to a band who always placed inspired exploration ahead of mere aesthetics.

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
Directed by Constance Grappo
Starring Christopher Pate, Denise Atkins, David Whitney

Producer Wilton Morley claims *Little Shop Of Horrors*, set in the early 60s, is truly a musical for the 80s. In some respects he's right. Here we have a musical with no happy resolution, in which every character is a loser — their downfall brought about through their own greed, weaknesses, outright villainies and self-destructiveness. Yet rather than being presented as tragedy, it's played as a kind of sordid comedy. We laugh at the demise of mankind.

We do laugh, in a big way. The situation's critical, but not serious (to borrow a phrase from the U.S. military). Frankly, it's not easy to take seriously a man-eating potplant that behaves like a spoilt three-year-old and talks like a Harlem pimp, even if it *is* quite the most obscene-looking object ever to occupy a Sydney stage. Its name is Audrey II, and (you guessed it), it came from outer space. Aptly described as "a diabolical cross between a choko vine and a killer shark", Audrey II comes alive through the bass voice of Chuck McKinney, the visual impact of several puppets (growing larger, as the plant's appetite grows), the puppeteering manipulations of Peter Seaborn... and, of course, the occasional hit of human blood. As with the Devil, Audrey II gets all the best tunes — and the best lines!

The rest of the cast do fine, as well. They've got surefire material to work with. The lyrics are often witty, and the 'book' (as a musical's script is called) has a smart, cynical intelligence — rather callous (all comedy has an element of heartlessness), and calculatedly bizarre.

The 'romantic' lead duo — Christopher Pate as the wimpy, downtrodden Seymour and Denise Atkins as the equally (more?) masochistic Audrey, a dumb blonde — were consistent, but not nearly as engaging as their supporting 'cast', David Whitney in multiple roles. I've been impressed by Whitney in several productions now, and it really is great to see someone as talented as he is given a part as fun to play with as his featured role here: Audrey's sadist boyfriend Orin, a "rock'n'roll dentist".

Whitney has verve and personal presence, which (without taking away from the show as a whole) is oddly lacking in most of the cast. They've so flattened themselves into cartoon caricatures, they've knocked out their individuality; you sense that almost any competent musical actor could step in to replace any character, without the show altering one iota... Director Connie Grappo has directed productions of *Little Shop* in Johannesburg and assisted on Broadway, the U.S. tours, in London and in Los Angeles, and while I'm sure he hasn't deliberately enforced a standard production 'mould' on this Australian cast, there is that feeling of a reproduced performance, with very few elements of personal interpretation apparent.

But no mind. *Little Shop Of Horrors* is not *Hamlet*. It's gleeful and gory and hip, and in the full-grown Audrey II we have a definite must see: a manipulative, conscienceless monster — a hero for the 80s.

ELLY McDONALD

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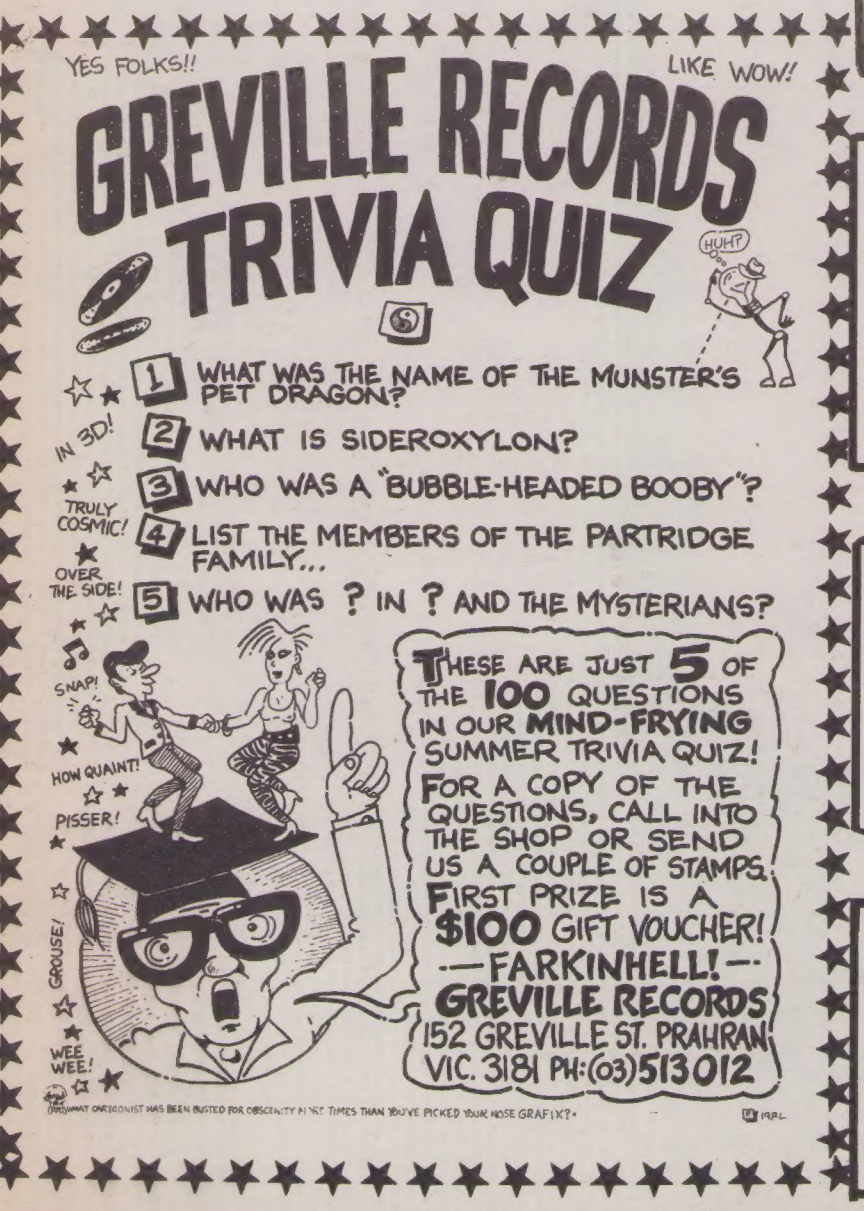
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